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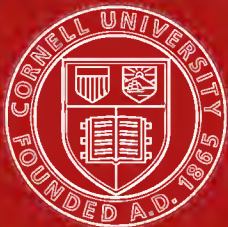


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*Edition de Luxe*

The Life and Works  
of  
Charles Lamb  
=  
IN TWELVE VOLUMES  
VOLUME XI

f<sub>c</sub>

*This Edition consists of Six Hundred and Seventy-five Copies*

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## CHAPTER IV

1817—1823

LETTERS TO THE WORDSWORTHS, BERNARD  
BARTON, AND OTHERS

TO WILLIAM AYRTON, Esq.

LETTER CLXXXIII.]

*May 17, 1817.*

My dear friend,  
Before I end,  
Have you any  
More orders for Don Giovanni,  
To give  
Him that doth live  
Your faithful Zany?

Without raillery,  
I mean Gallery  
Ones :  
For I am a person that shuns

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

All ostentation  
And being at the top of the fashion ;  
And seldom go to operas  
But *in formâ pauperis* !

I go to the play  
In a very economical sort of a way,  
Rather to see  
Than be seen ;  
Though I'm no ill sight  
Neither,  
By candle-light  
And in some kinds of weather.  
You might pit me  
For height  
Against Kean ;  
But in a grand tragic scene  
I'm nothing :  
It would create a kind of loathing  
To see me act Hamlet ;  
There'd be many a damn let  
Fly  
At my presumption,  
If I should try,  
Being a fellow of no gumption.

By the way, tell me candidly how you relish  
This, which they call  
The lapidary style ?  
Opinions vary.



## TO AYRTON

The late Mr. Mellish  
Could never abide it ;  
He thought it vile,  
And coxcombical.  
My friend the poet laureat,  
Who is a great lawyer at  
Anything comical,  
Was the first who tried it ;  
But Mellish could never abide it ;  
But it signifies very little what Mellish said,  
Because he is dead.

For who can confute  
A body that's mute ?  
Or who would fight  
With a senseless sprite ?  
Or think of troubling  
An impenetrable old goblin,  
That's dead and gone,  
And stiff as stone,  
To convince him with arguments pro and con,  
As if some live logician,  
Bred up at Merton,—  
Or Mr. Hazlitt, the metaphysician ;—  
Hey, Mr. Ayrton !  
With all your rare tone.

For tell me how should an apparition  
List to your call,  
Though you talk'd for ever,

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

Ever so clever :  
When his ear itself,  
By which he must hear, or not hear at all,  
Is laid on the shelf?  
Or put the case  
(For more grace),  
It were a female spectre—  
Now could you expect her  
To take much gust  
In long speeches,  
With her tongue as dry as dust,  
In a sandy place,  
Where no peaches,  
Nor lemons, nor limes, nor oranges hang,  
To drop on the drought of an arid harangue,  
Or quench,  
With their sweet drench,  
The fiery pangs which the worms inflict,  
With their endless nibblings,  
Like quibblings,  
Which the corpse may dislike, but can ne'er contradict?  
Hey, Mr. Ayrton!  
With all your rare tone.  
I am,  
C. LAMB.

## TO FIELD

TO MR. BARRON FIELD

LETTER CLXXXIV.]

August 31, 1817.

My dear Barron—The bearer of this letter so far across the seas is Mr. Lawrey, who comes out to you as a missionary, and whom I have been strongly importuned to recommend to you as a most worthy creature by Mr. Fenwick, a very old, honest friend of mine ; of whom, if my memory does not deceive me, you have had some knowledge heretofore as editor of the *Statesman* ; a man of talent, and patriotic. If you can show him any facilities in his arduous undertaking, you will oblige us much. Well, and how does the land of thieves use you ? and how do you pass your time, in your extra-judicial intervals ? Going about the streets with a lantern, like Diogenes, looking for an honest man ? You may look long enough, I fancy. Do give me some notion of the manners of the inhabitants where you are. They don't thief all day long, do they ? No human property could stand such continuous battery. And what do they do when they an't stealing ?

Have you got a theatre ? What pieces are performed ? Shakspeare's, I suppose ; not so much for the poetry, as for his having once been in danger of leaving his country on account of certain "small deer."

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

Have you poets among you? Damn'd plagiarists, I fancy, if you have any. I would not trust an idea, or a pocket-handkerchief of mine, among 'em. You are almost competent to answer Lord Bacon's problem, whether a nation of atheists can subsist together. You are practically in one :—

“So thievish 'tis, that the eighth commandment itself  
Scarce seemeth there to be.”

Our old honest world goes on with little perceptible variation. Of course you have heard of poor Mitchell's death, and that G. Dyer is one of Lord Stanhope's residuaries. I am afraid he has not touched much of the residue yet. He is positively as lean as Cassius. Barnes is going to Demerara, or Essequibo, I am not quite certain which. Alsager is turned actor. He came out in genteel comedy at Cheltenham this season, and has hopes of a London engagement.

For my own history, I am just in the same spot, doing the same thing (*videlicet*, little or nothing) as when you left me; only I have positive hopes that I shall be able to conquer that inveterate habit of smoking which you may remember I indulged in. I think of making a beginning this evening, *viz.* Sunday, 31st Aug. 1817, not Wednesday, 2nd Feb. 1818, as it will be perhaps when you read this for the first time. There is the difficulty of writing

## MARY LAMB TO MISS WORDSWORTH

from one end of the globe (hemispheres, I call 'em) to another ! Why, half the truths I have sent you in this letter will become lies before they reach you, and some of the lies (which I have mixed for variety's sake, and to exercise your judgment in the finding of them out) may be turned into sad realities before you shall be called upon to detect them. Such are the defects of going by different chronologies. Your "now" is not my "now"; and again, your "then" is not my "then"; but my "now" may be your "then," and *vice versa*. Whose head is competent to these things ?

How does Mrs. Field get on in her geography ? Does she know where she is by this time ? I am not sure sometimes you are not in another planet ; but then I don't like to ask Capt. Burney, or any of those that know anything about it, for fear of exposing my ignorance.

Our kindest remembrances, however, to Mrs. F., if she will accept of reminiscences from another planet, or at least another hemisphere.

C. L.

## MARY LAMB TO MISS WORDSWORTH

LETTER CLXXXV.]

November 21, 1817.

My dear Miss Wordsworth—Your kind letter has given us very great pleasure ; the sight of

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

your handwriting was a most welcome surprise to us. We have heard good tidings of you by all our friends who were so fortunate as to visit you this Summer, and rejoice to see it confirmed by yourself. You have quite the advantage, in volunteering a letter ; there is no merit in replying to so welcome a stranger.

We have left the Temple. I think you will be sorry to hear this. I know I have never been so well satisfied with thinking of you at Rydal Mount, as when I could connect the idea of you with your own Grasmere Cottage. Our rooms were dirty and out of repair, and the inconveniences of living in chambers became every year more irksome, and so, at last, we mustered up resolution enough to leave the good old place, that so long had sheltered us, and here we are, living at a brazier's shop, No. 20, in Russell Street, Covent Garden, a place all alive with noise and bustle ; Drury Lane Theatre in sight from our front, and Covent Garden from our back windows. The hubbub of the carriages returning from the play does not annoy me in the least ; strange that it does not, for it is quite tremendous. I quite enjoy looking out of the window, and listening to the calling up of the carriages, and the squabbles of the coachmen and linkboys. It is the oddest scene to look down upon ; I am sure you would be amused with it. It is well I am in a cheerful place, or I should have many misgivings about

## MARY LAMB TO MISS WORDSWORTH

leaving the Temple. I look forward with great pleasure to the prospect of seeing my good friend, Miss Hutchinson. I wish Rydal Mount, with all its inhabitants enclosed, were to be transplanted with her, and to remain stationary in the midst of Covent Garden.

I passed through the street lately where Mr. and Mrs. Wordsworth lodged ; several fine new houses, which were then just rising out of the ground, are quite finished, and a noble entrance made that way into Portland Place. I am very sorry for Mr. De Quincey. What a blunder the poor man made when he took up his dwelling among the mountains ! I long to see my friend Pypos. Coleridge is still at Little Hampton with Mrs. Gillman ; he has been so ill as to be confined to his room almost the whole time he has been there.

Charles has had all his Hogarths bound in a book ; they were sent home yesterday, and now that I have them altogether, and perceive the advantage of peeping close at them through my spectacles, I am reconciled to the loss of them hanging round the room, which has been a great mortification to me—in vain I tried to console myself with looking at our new chairs and carpets, for we have got new chairs, and carpets covering all over our two sitting-rooms ; I missed my old friends and could not be comforted—then I would resolve to learn to look out of the window, a habit I never could

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

attain in my life, and I have given it up as a thing quite impracticable—yet when I was at Brighton, last Summer, the first week I never took my eyes off from the sea, not even to look in a book : I had not seen the sea for sixteen years. Mrs. Morgan, who was with us, kept her liking, and continued her seat in the window till the very last, while Charles and I played truants, and wandered among the hills, which we magnified into little mountains, and *almost as good as* Westmoreland scenery : certainly we made discoveries of many pleasant walks, which few of the Brighton visitors have ever dreamed of—for, like as is the case in the neighbourhood of London, after the first two or three miles we were sure to find ourselves in a perfect solitude. I hope we shall meet before the walking faculties of either of us fail ; you say you can walk fifteen miles with ease ; that is exactly my stint, and more fatigues me ; four or five miles every third or fourth day, keeping very quiet between, was all Mrs. Morgan could accomplish.

God bless you and yours. Love to all and each one.

I am ever yours most affectionately,

M. LAMB.



## TO MISS WORDSWORTH

### TO MISS WORDSWORTH

LETTER CLXXXVI.]

*November 21, 1817.*

Dear Miss Wordsworth—Here we are, transplanted from our native soil. I thought we never could have been torn up from the Temple. Indeed it was an ugly wrench, but like a tooth, now 'tis out, and I am easy. We never can strike root so deep in any other ground. This, where we are, is a light bit of gardener's mould, and if they take us up from it, it will cost no blood and groans, like mandrakes pulled up. We are in the individual spot I like best, in all this great city. The theatres, with all their noises. Covent Garden, dearer to me than any gardens of Alcinous, where we are morally sure of the earliest peas and 'sparagus. Bow Street, where the thieves are examined, within a few yards of us. Mary had not been here four-and-twenty hours before she saw a thief. She sits at the window working; and casually throwing out her eyes, she sees a concourse of people coming this way, with a constable to conduct the solemnity. These little incidents agreeably diversify a female life.

Mary has brought her part of this letter to an orthodox and loving conclusion, which is very well, for I have no room for pansies and remembrances. What a nice holyday I got on Wednesday by favour of a princess dying!

C. L.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

TO J. PAYNE COLLIER

LETTER CLXXXVII.]

*The Garden of England,  
December 10, 1817.*

Dear J. P. C.—I know how zealously you feel for our friend S. T. Coleridge ; and I know that you and your family attended his lectures four or five years ago. He is in bad health, and worse mind : and unless something is done to lighten his mind he will soon be reduced to his extremities ; and even these are not in the best condition. I am sure that you will do for him what you can ; but at present he seems in a mood to do for himself. He projects a new course, not of physic, nor of metaphysic, nor a new course of life, but a new course of lectures on Shakspeare and Poetry. There is no man better qualified (always excepting number one) ; but I am pre-engaged for a series of dissertations on India and Indiapendence, to be completed, at the expense of the Company, in I know not (yet) how many volumes foolscap folio. I am busy getting up my Hindoo mythology ; and, for the purpose, I am once more enduring Southey's curse. To be serious, Coleridge's state and affairs make me so ; and there are particular reasons just now, and have been any time for the last twenty years, why he should succeed. He will do so with a little encouragement. I have not seen him

TO HAYDON—MRS. WORDSWORTH

lately ; and he does not know that I am writing.

Yours (for Coleridge's sake) in haste,  
C. LAMB.

TO BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON

LETTER CLXXXVIII.]

*December 1817.*

My dear Haydon—I will come with pleasure to 22, Lisson Grove, North, at Rosse's, half-way up, right-hand side, if I can find it.

Yours,  
C. LAMB.

20, Russell Court,  
Covent Garden, East.  
Half-way up, next the corner,  
Left-hand side.

TO MRS. WORDSWORTH

LETTER CLXXXIX.]

*East India House,  
February 18, 1818.*

My dear Mrs. Wordsworth—I have repeatedly taken pen in hand to answer your kind letter. My sister should more properly have done it, but she having failed, I consider myself answerable for her debts. I am now trying to do it in the midst of commercial noises, and with a quill which seems more ready to glide

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

into arithmetical figures and names of gourds, cassia, cardamoms, aloes, ginger, or tea, than into kindly responses and friendly recollections. The reason why I cannot write letters at home is, that I am never alone. Plato's—(I write to W. W. now)—Plato's double-animal parted never longed more to be reciprocally re-united in the system of its first creation than I sometimes do to be but for a moment single and separate. Except my morning's walk to the office, which is like treading on sands of gold for that reason, I am never so. I cannot walk home from office but some officious friend offers his unwelcome courtesies to accompany me. All the morning I am pestered. I could sit and gravely cast up sums in great books, or compare sum with sum, and write "paid" against this, and "unpaid" against t'other, and yet reserve in some corner of my mind "some darling thoughts all my own,"—faint memory of some passage in a book, or the tone of an absent friend's voice—a snatch of Miss Burrell's singing, or a gleam of Fanny Kelly's divine plain face. The two operations might be going on at the same time without thwarting, as the sun's two motions (earth's, I mean), or as I sometimes turn round till I am giddy, in my back parlour, while my sister is walking longitudinally in the front; or as the shoulder of veal twists round with the spit, while the smoke wreathes up the chimney. But there are a set of amateurs of the Belles

## TO MRS. WORDSWORTH

Lettres—the gay science—who come to me as a sort of rendezvous, putting questions of criticism, of British Institutions, Lalla Rookhs, etc.—what Coleridge said at the lecture last night—who have the form of reading men, but, for any possible use reading can be to them, but to talk of, might as well have been Ante-Cadmeans born, or have lain sucking out the sense of an Egyptian hieroglyph as long as the pyramids will last, before they should find it. These pests worrit me at business, and in all its intervals, perplexing my accounts, poisoning my little salutary warming-time at the fire, puzzling my paragraphs if I take a newspaper, cramming in between my own free thoughts and a column of figures, which had come to an amicable compromise but for them. Their noise ended, one of them, as I said, accompanies me home, lest I should be solitary for a moment ; he at length takes his welcome leave at the door ; up I go, mutton on table, hungry as hunter, hope to forget my cares, and bury them in the agreeable abstraction of mastication ; knock at the door, in comes Mr. Hazlitt, or Mr. Martin Burney, or Morgan Demigorgon, or my brother, or somebody, to prevent my eating alone—a process absolutely necessary to my poor wretched digestion. O the pleasure of eating alone !—eating my dinner alone ! let me think of it. But in they come, and make it absolutely necessary that I should open a bottle of orange ; for my meat

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

turns into stone when any one dines with me, if I have not wine. Wine can mollify stones ; then *that* wine turns into acidity, acerbity, misanthropy, a hatred of my interrupters—(God bless 'em ! I love some of 'em dearly), and with the hatred, a still greater aversion to their going away. Bad is the dead sea they bring upon me, choking and deadening, but worse is the deader dry sand they leave me on, if they go before bed-time. Come never, I would say to these spoilers of my dinner ; but if you come, never go ! The fact is, this interruption does not happen very often ; but every time it comes by surprise, that present bane of my life, orange wine, with all its dreary stifling consequences, follows. Evening company I should always like had I any mornings, but I am saturated with human faces (*divine* forsooth !) and voices all the golden morning ; and five evenings in a week would be as much as I should covet to be in company ; but I assure you that is a wonderful week in which I can get two, or one to myself. I am never C. L., but always C. L. and Co. He who thought it not good for man to be alone, preserve me from the more prodigious monstrosity of being never by myself ! I forget bed-time, but even there these sociable frogs clamber up to annoy me. Once a week, generally some singular evening that, being alone, I go to bed at the hour I ought always to be a-bed ; just close to my bedroom window is the

## TO MRS. WORDSWORTH

club-room of a public-house, where a set of singers, I take them to be chorus-singers of the two theatres (it must be *both of them*), begin their orgies. They are a set of fellows (as I conceive) who, being limited by their talents to the burthen of the song at the play-houses, in revenge have got the common popular airs by Bishop, or some cheap composer, arranged for choruses ; that is, to be sung all in chorus. At least I never can catch any of the text of the plain song, nothing but the Babylonish choral howl at the tail on't. "That fury being quenched"—the howl, I mean—a burden succeeds of shouts and clapping, and knocking of the table. At length overtaken nature drops under it, and escapes for a few hours into the society of the sweet silent creatures of dreams, which go away with mocks and mows at cock-crow. And then I think of the words Christabel's father used (bless me, I have dipt in the wrong ink !) to say every morning by way of variety when he awoke :

"Every knell, the Baron saith,  
Wakes us up to a world of death"—

or something like it. All I mean by this senseless interrupted tale, is, that by my central situation I am a little over-companied. Not that I have any animosity against the good creatures that are so anxious to drive away the harpy solitude from me. I like 'em, and cards, and a

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

cheerful glass ; but I mean merely to give you an idea, between office confinement and after-office society, how little time I can call my own. I mean only to draw a picture, not to make an inference. I would not that I know of have it otherwise. I only wish sometimes I could exchange some of my faces and voices for the faces and voices which a late visitation brought most welcome, and carried away, leaving regret, but more pleasure, even a kind of gratitude, at being so often favoured with that kind northern visitation. My London faces and noises don't hear me—I mean no disrespect, or I should explain myself, that instead of their return 220 times a year, and the return of W. W., etc., seven times in 104 weeks, some more equal distribution might be found. I have scarce room to put in Mary's kind love, and my poor name,

C. LAMB.

W. H. goes on lecturing against W. W. and making copious use of quotations from said W. W. to give a zest to said lectures. S. T. C. is lecturing with success. I have not heard either him or H., but I dined with S. T. C. at Gillman's a Sunday or two since, and he was well and in good spirits. I mean to hear some of the course ; but lectures are not much to my taste, whatever the lecturer may be. If *read*, they are dismal flat, and you can't think why you are brought together to hear a man read his works,



## TO MRS. WORDSWORTH

which you could read so much better at leisure yourself. If delivered extempore, I am always in pain lest the gift of utterance should suddenly fail the orator in the middle, as it did me at the dinner given in honour of me at the London tavern. "Gentlemen," said I, and there I stopped; the rest my feelings were under the necessity of supplying. Mrs. Wordsworth *will* go on, kindly haunting us with visions of seeing the lakes once more, which never can be realised. Between us there is a great gulf, not of inexplicable moral antipathies and distances, I hope, as there seemed to be between me and that gentleman concerned in the Stamp Office, that I so strangely recoiled from at Haydon's. I think I had an instinct that he was the head of an office. I hate all such people—accountants' deputy accountants. The dear abstract notion of the East India Company, as long as she is unseen, is pretty, rather poetical; but as she makes herself manifest by the persons of such beasts, I loathe and detest her as the scarlet what-do-you-call-her of Babylon. I thought, after abridging us of all our red-letter days, they had done their worst; but I was deceived in the length to which heads of offices, those true liberty-haters, can go. They are the tyrants; not Ferdinand, nor Nero. By a decree passed this week, they have abridged us of the immemorially-observed custom of going at one o'clock of a Saturday, the little shadow of a

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

holiday left us. Dear W. W., be thankful for liberty.

TO MESSRS. OLLIER

LETTER CXC.]

June 18, 1818.

Dear Sir (whichever opens it)—I am going off to Birmingham<sup>m</sup>. I find my books, whatever faculty of selling they may have (I wish they had more for {*your* } *my* } sake), are admirably adapted for giving away. You have been bounteous. Six more, and I shall have satisfied all just claims. Am I taking too great a liberty in begging you to send 4 as follows, and reserve 2 for me when I come home? That will make 31. Thirty-one times 12 is 372 shillings—eighteen pounds twelve shillings!!! But here are my friends, to whom, if you *could* transmit them, as I shall be away a month, you will greatly

Oblige the obliged,

C. LAMB.

Mr. Ayrton, James Street, Buckingham Gate ;

Mr. Alsager, Suffolk Street East, Southwark, by Horsemonger Lane ;

And in one parcel,  
directed to R. Southey, Esq., Keswick, Cumberland :

## TO SOUTHEY

One for R. S. ;

And one for W<sup>m</sup>. Wordsworth, Esq.

If you will be kind enough simply to write "From the Author" in all 4, you will still further, etc.

Either Longman or Murray is in the frequent habit of sending books to Southey, and will take charge of the parcel. It will be as well to write in at the beginning thus :

"R. Southey, Esq. From the Author."

"W. Wordsworth, Esq. From the Author."

Then, if I can find the remaining 2 left for me at Russell St. when I return, rather than encroach any more on the heap, I will engage to make no more new friends *ad infinitum*, yourselves being the last.

Yours truly,

C. L.

I think Southey will give us a lift in that damn'd *Quarterly*. I meditate an attack upon that Cobbler Gifford, which shall appear immediately after any favourable mention which S. may make in the *Quarterly*. It can't, in decent *gratitude*, appear *before*.

## TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

LETTER CXCI.]

Monday, October 26, 1818.

Dear Southey—I am pleased with your friendly remembrances of my little things. I

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

do not know whether I have done a silly thing or a wise one, but it is of no great consequence. I run no risk, and care for no censures. My bread and cheese is stable as the foundations of Leadenhall Street, and if it hold out as long as the "foundations of our Empire in the East," I shall do pretty well. You and W. W. should have had your presentation copies more ceremoniously sent, but I had no copies when I was leaving town for my holidays, and rather than delay, commissioned my bookseller to send them thus nakedly. By not hearing from W. W. or you, I began to be afraid Murray had not sent them. I do not see S. T. C. so often as I could wish. He never comes to me ; and though his host and hostess are very friendly, it puts me out of my way to go see one person at another person's house. It was the same when he resided at Morgan's. Not but they also were more than civil ; but, after all, one feels so welcome at one's own house. Have you seen poor Miss Betham's "Vignettes" ? Some of them, the second particularly, "To Lucy," are sweet and good as herself, while she was herself. She is in some measure abroad again. I am *better than I deserve* to be. The hot weather has been such a treat ! Mary joins in this little corner in kindest remembrances to you all.

C. L.

## TO COLERIDGE

TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

LETTER CXCII.]

December 24, 1818.

My dear Coleridge—I have been in a state of incessant hurry ever since the receipt of your ticket. It found me incapable of attending you, it being the night of Kenney's new comedy, which has utterly failed. You know my local aptitudes at such a time; I have been a thorough rendezvous for all consultations. My head begins to clear up a little, but it has had bells in it. Thank you kindly for your ticket, though the mournful prognostic which accompanies it certainly renders its permanent pretensions less marketable; but I trust to hear many a course yet. You excepted Christmas week, by which I understood *next week*; I thought Christmas week was that which Christmas Sunday ushered in. We are sorry it never lies in your way to come to us; but, dear Mahomet, we will come to you. Will it be convenient to all the good people at Highgate, if we take a stage up, *not next Sunday*, but the following, viz., 3rd January, 1819? Shall we be too late to catch a skirt of the old out-goer? How the years crumble from under us! We shall hope to see you before then; but, if not, let us know if *then* will be convenient. Can we secure a coach home?

Believe me ever yours,

C. LAMB.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

I have but one holiday, which is Christmas Day itself nakedly : no pretty garnish and fringes of St. John's Day, Holy Innocents, etc., that used to bestud it all around in the calendar. *Improbe labor !* I write six hours every day in this candle-light fog-den at Leadenhall.

### TO JOHN CHAMBERS

LETTER CXCIH.]

[1818.]

Dear C.—I steal a few minutes from a painful and laborious avocation, aggravated by the absence of some that should assist me, to say how extremely happy we should be to see you return clean as the cripple out of the pool of Bethesda. That damn'd scorbutic—how came you by it? . . . You are now fairly a damaged lot ; as Venn would say, One Scratched. You might play Scrub in the *Beaux' Stratagem*. The best post your friends could promote you to would be a scrubbing post. "Aye, there's the rub." I generally get tired after the third rubber. But you, I suppose, tire twice the number every day. First, there's your mother, she begins after breakfast ; then your little sister takes it up about Nuncheon time, till her bones crack, and some kind neighbour comes in to lend a hand, scrub, scrub, scrub, and nothing will get the intolerable itch (for I am persuaded it is the itch) out of

## TO CHAMBERS

your penance-doing bones. A cursed thing just at this time, when everybody wants to get out of town as well as yourself. Of course, I don't mean to reproach you. You can't help it, the whoreson tingling in your blood. I dare say you would if you could. But don't you think you could do a little work, if you came? as much as D—— does before 12 o'Clock. Hang him, there he sits at that cursed *Times*—and latterly he has had the *Berkshire Chronicle* sent him every Tuesday and Friday to get at the County news. Why, that letter which you favored him with, appears to me to be very well and clearly written. The man that wrote that might make out warrants, or write Committees. There was as much in quantity written as would have filled four volumes of the Indigo appendix; and when we are so busy as we are, every little helps. But I throw out these observations merely as innuendos. By the way there's a Doctor Lamert in Leadenhall Street, who sells a mixture to purify the blood. No. 114 Leadenhall Street, near the market. But it is necessary that his Patients should be on the spot, that he may see them every day. There's a sale of Indigo advertised for July, forty thousand lots—10,000 chests only, but they sell them in quarter chests which makes 40,000. By the bye a droll accident happened here on Thursday, Wadd and Plumley got quarrelling about a kneebuckle of Hyde's which the latter affirmed not to be standard; Wadd

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

was nettled at this, and said something reflecting on tradesmen and shopkeepers, and Plumley struck him. . . . Friend is married ; he has married a Roman Catholic, which has offended his family, but they have come to an agreement, that the boys (if they have children) shall be bred up in the father's religion, and the girls in the mother's, which I think equitable enough. . . . I am determined my children shall be brought up in their father's religion, if they can find out what it is. Bye is about publishing a volume of poems which he means to dedicate to Matthie. Methinks he might have found a better Mecænas. They are chiefly amatory, others of them stupid, the greater part very far below mediocrity ; but they discover much tender feeling ; they are most like Petrarch of any foreign Poet, or what we might have supposed Petrarch would have written if Petrarch had been born a fool ! Grinwallows is made master of the ceremonies at Dandelion, near Margate ; of course he gives up the office. "My Harry" makes so many faces that it is impossible to sit opposite him without smiling. Dowley danced a Quadrille at Court on the Queen's birthday with Lady Thynne, Lady Desbrow, and Lady Louisa Manners. It is said his performance was graceful and airy. Cabel has taken an unaccountable fancy into his head that he is Fuller, member for Sussex. He imitates his blunt way of speaking. I remain much the same as you remember,



## TO CHAMBERS

very universally beloved and esteemed, possessing everybody's good-will, and trying at least to deserve it ; the same steady adherence to principle, and correct regard for truth, which always marked my conduct, marks it still. If I am singular in anything it is in too great a squeamishness to anything that remotely looks like a falsehood. I am call'd Old Honesty ; sometimes Upright Telltruth, Esq., and I own it tickles my vanity a little. The Committee have formally abolish'd all holydays whatsoever—for which may the Devil, who keeps no holydays, have them in his eternal burning workshop. When I say holydays, I mean Calendar holydays, for at Medley's instigation they have agreed to a sort of scale by which the Chief has power to give leave of absence, viz. :—

Those who have been 50 years and upwards  
to be absent 4 days in the year, but not  
without leave of the Chief.

35 years and upward, 3 days,  
25 years and upward, 2 days,  
18 years and upward, 1 day,

which I think very Liberal. We are also to sign our name when we *go* as well as when we *come*, and every quarter of an hour we sign, to show that we are here. Mins and Gardner take it in turn to bring round the book—O here *is* Mins with the Book—no, it's Gardner—“What's that, G.?” “The appearance book, Sir” (with a gentle inclination of his head, and smiling).

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

“What the devil, is the quarter come again?”  
It annoys Dodwell amazingly; he sometimes has  
to sign six or seven times while he is reading the  
Newspaper—

[*Unfinished.*]

### TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

LETTER CXCIV.]

May 1819.

Dear Wordsworth—I received a copy of  
“Peter Bell” a week ago, and I hope the author  
will not be offended if I say I do not much  
relish it. The humour, if it is meant for humour,  
is forced; and then the price!—sixpence would  
have been dear for it. Mind, I do not mean  
*your* “Peter Bell,” but *a* “Peter Bell” which  
preceded it about a week, and is in every book-  
seller’s shop window in London, the type and  
paper nothing differing from the true one, the  
preface signed W. W., and the supplementary  
preface quoting as the author’s words an extract  
from the supplementary preface to the “Lyrical  
Ballads.” Is there no law against these rascals?  
I would have this Lambert Simnel whipt at the  
cart’s tail. Then there is Rogers! He has  
been re-writing your Poem of the Strid, and  
publishing it at the end of his “Human Life.”  
Tie him up to the cart, hangman, while you are  
about it. Who started the spurious “P. B.” I

## TO WORDSWORTH

have not heard. I should guess, one of the sneering brothers, the vile Smiths ; but I have heard no name mentioned. "Peter Bell" (not the mock one) is excellent ; for its matter, I mean. I cannot say that the style of it quite satisfies me. It is too lyrical. The auditors to whom it is feigned to be told, do not *arride* me. I would rather it had been told me, the reader, at once. "Heartleap Well" is the tale for me ; in matter as good as this ; in manner infinitely before it, in my poor judgment. Why did you not add "The Waggoner" ?—Have I thanked you though, yet, for "Peter Bell" ? I would not *not have it* for a good deal of money. C—— is very foolish to scribble about books. Neither his tongue nor fingers are very retentive. But I shall not say anything to him about it. He would only begin a very long story, with a very long face ; and I see him far too seldom to tease him with affairs of business or conscience when I do see him. He never comes near our house ; and when we go to see him he is generally writing, or thinking. He is writing in his study till the dinner comes, and that is scarce over before the stage summons us away. The mock "P. B." had only this effect on me, that after twice reading it over in hopes to find something diverting in it, I reached your two books off the shelf, and set into a steady reading of them, till I had nearly finished both before I went to bed : the two of your last

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

edition, of course, I mean : and in the morning I awoke determining to take down the *Excursion*. I wish the scoundrel imitator could know this. But why waste a wish on him? I do not believe that paddling about with a stick in a pond, and fishing up a dead author, whom *his* intolerable wrongs had driven to that deed of desperation, would turn the heart of one of these obtuse literary BELLS. There is no Cock for such Peters ; — damn 'em ! I am glad this aspiration came upon the red ink line. It is more of a bloody curse. I have delivered over your other presents to Alsager and G. D. A., I am sure, will value it, and be proud of the hand from which it came. To G. D. a poem is a poem. His own as good as anybody's, and (God bless him !) anybody's as good as his own ; for I do not think he has the most distant guess of the possibility of one poem being better than another. The gods, by denying him the very faculty itself of discrimination, have effectually cut off every seed of envy in his bosom. But with envy, they excided curiosity also ; and if you wish the copy again, which you destined for him, I think I shall be able to find it again for you, on his third shelf, where he stuffs his presentation copies, uncut, in shape and matter resembling a lump of dry dust ; but on carefully removing that stratum, a thing like a pamphlet will emerge. I have tried this with fifty different poetical works that have been given G. D. in

## TO MANNING

return for as many of his own performances ; and I confess I never had any scruple in taking *my own* again, wherever I found it, shaking the adherences off ; and by this means one copy of “my works” served for G. D., and, with a little dusting, was made over to my good friend Dr. G——, who little thought whose leavings he was taking when he made that graceful bow. By the way, the Doctor is the only one of my acquaintance who bows gracefully ; my town acquaintance, I mean. How do you like my way of writing with two inks ? I think it is pretty and motley. Suppose Mrs. W. adopts it, the next time she holds the pen for you. My dinner waits. I have no time to indulge any longer in these laborious curiosities. God bless you, and cause to thrive and burgeon whatsoever you write, and fear no inks of miserable poetasters.

Yours truly,

CHARLES LAMB.

Mary’s love.

## TO THOMAS MANNING

LETTER CXC.V.]

May 28, 1819.

My dear M.—I want to know how your brother is, if you have heard lately. I want to know about you. I wish you were nearer. How are my cousins, the Gladmans of Wheat-

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

hamstead, and farmer Bruton? Mrs. Bruton is a glorious woman.

Hail, Mackery End—

This is a fragment of a blank verse poem which I once meditated, but got no further. The E. I. H. has been thrown into a quandary by the strange phenomenon of poor Tommy Bye, whom I have known man and mad-man twenty-seven years, he being elder here than myself by nine years and more. He was always a pleasant, gossiping, half-headed, muzzy, dozing, dreaming, walk-about, inoffensive chap ; a little too fond of the creature—(who isn't at times ?) ; but Tommy had not brains to work off an over-night's surfeit by ten o'clock next morning ; and unfortunately, in he wandered the other morning drunk with last night, and with a superfætation of drink taken in since he set out from bed. He came staggering under his double burthen, like trees in Java, bearing at once blossom, fruit, and falling fruit, as I have heard you or some other traveller tell, with his face literally as blue as the bluest firmament ; some wretched calico, that he had mopped his poor oozy front with, had rendered up its native dye ; and the devil a bit would he consent to wash it, but swore it was characteristic, for he was going to the sale of indigo, and set up a laugh which I did not think the lungs of mortal man were competent to. It was like a thousand people laughing, or

## TO MANNING

the Goblin Page. He imagined afterwards that the whole office had been laughing at him, so strange did his own sounds strike upon his *non-sensorium* ! But Tommy has laughed his last laugh, and awoke the next day to find himself reduced from an abused income of £600 per annum to one-sixth of the sum, after thirty-six years' tolerably good service. The quality of mercy was not strained in his behalf: the gentle dewdrops dropt not on him from heaven. It just came across me that I was writing to Canton. Will you drop in to-morrow night? Fanny Kelly is coming, if she does not cheat us. Mrs. *Gold* is well, but proves "uncoined," as the lovers about Wheathamstead would say.

I have not had such a quiet half hour to sit down to a quiet letter for many years. I have not been interrupted above four times. I wrote a letter the other day, in alternate lines, black ink and red, and you cannot think how it chilled the flow of ideas. Next Monday is Whit-Monday. What a reflection ! Twelve years ago, and I should have kept that and the following holidays in the fields a-Maying. All of those pretty pastoral delights are over. This dead, everlasting dead desk,—how it weighs the spirit of a gentleman down ! This dead wood of the desk, instead of your living trees ! But then again, I hate the Joskins, *a name for Hertfordshire bumpkins*. Each state of life has its inconvenience ; but then again, mine has more than

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

one. Not that I repine, or grudge, or murmur at my destiny. I have meat and drink, and decent apparel ; I shall, at least, when I get a new hat.

A red-haired man has just interrupted me. He has broke the current of my thoughts. I haven't a word to add. I don't know why I send this letter, but I have had a hankering to hear about you some days. Perhaps it will go off before your reply comes. If it don't, I assure you no letter was ever welcomer from you, from Paris or Macao.

C. LAMB.

### TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

LETTER CXCVI.]

*June 7, 1819.*

My dear Wordsworth—You cannot imagine how proud we are here of the dedication. We read it twice for once that we do the poem. I mean all through ; yet “Benjamin” is no common favourite ; there is a spirit of beautiful tolerance in it. It is as good as it was in 1806 ; and it will be as good in 1829, if our dim eyes shall be awake to peruse it. Methinks there is a kind of shadowing affinity between the subject of the narrative and the subject of the dedication ; but I will not enter into personal themes else, substituting \* \* \* \* \* for Ben, and the Honourable United Company of Merchants



## TO WORDSWORTH

trading to the East Indies, for the master of the misused team, it might seem, by no far-fetched analogy, to point its dim warnings hitherward ; but I reject the omen, especially as its import seems to have been diverted to another victim.

I will never write another letter with alternate inks. You cannot imagine how it cramps the flow of the style. I can conceive Pindar (I do not mean to compare myself to *him*), by the command of Hiero, the Sicilian tyrant (was not he the tyrant of some place ? fie on my neglect of history !)—I can conceive him by command of Hiero or Perillus set down to pen an Isthmian or Nemean panegyric in lines, alternate red and black. I maintain he couldn't have done it ; it would have been a strait-laced torture to his muse ; he would have call'd for the bull for a relief. Neither could Lycidas, nor the Chorics (how do you like the word ?) of Samson Agonistes, have been written with two inks. Your couplets, with points, epilogues to Mr. H.'s, etc., might be even benefited by the twyfount, where one line (the second) is for point, and the first for rhyme. I think the alternation would assist, like a mould. I maintain it, you could not have written your stanzas on pre-existence with two inks. Try another ; and Rogers, with his silver standish, having one ink only, I will bet my "Ode on Tobacco," against the "Pleasures of Memory,"—and "Hope," too,—shall put more fervour of en-

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

thusiasm into the same subject than you can with your two ; he shall do it *stans pede in uno*, as it were.

The "Waggoner" is very ill put up in boards ; at least it seems to me always to open at the dedication ; but that is a mechanical fault. I re-read the "White Doe of Rylstone" ; the title should be always written at length, as Mary Sabilla Novello, a very nice woman of our acquaintance, always signs hers at the bottom of the shortest note. Mary told her, if her name had been Mary Ann, she would have signed M. A. Novello, or M. only, dropping the A. ; which makes me think, with some other trifles, that she understands something of human nature. My pen goes galloping on most rhapsodically, glad to have escaped the bondage of two inks.

Manning had just sent it home, and it came as fresh to me as the immortal creature it speaks of. M. sent it home with a note, having this passage in it : "I cannot help writing to you while I am reading Wordsworth's poem. I am got into the third canto, and say that it raises my opinion of him very much indeed. 'Tis broad, noble, poetical, with a masterly scanning of human actions, absolutely above common readers. What a manly (implied) interpretation of (bad) party-actions, as trampling the Bible, etc. !" and so he goes on.

I do not know which I like best,—the pro-

## TO WORDSWORTH

logue (the latter part especially) to "P. Bell," or the epilogue to "Benjamin." Yes, I tell stories ; I do know I like the last best ; and the "Waggoner" altogether is a pleasanter remembrance to me than the "Itinerant." If it were not, the page before the first page would and ought to make it so. The sonnets are not all new to me ; of those which are new, the ninth I like best. Thank you for that to Walton. I take it as a favour done to me, that, being so old a darling of mine, you should bear testimony to his worth in a book containing a dedic—— : I cannot write the vain word at full length any longer.

If, as you say, the "Waggoner," in some sort, came at my call, oh for a potent voice to call forth the "Recluse" from his profound dormitory, where he sleeps forgetful of his foolish charge—the world !

Had I three inks, I would invoke him ! Talfourd has written a most kind review of J. Woodvil, etc., in the *Champion*. He is your most zealous admirer, in solitude and in crowds. H. Crabb Robinson gives me any dear prints that I happen to admire ; and I love him for it and for other things. Alsager shall have his copy ; but at present I have lent it *for a day only*, not choosing to part with my own. Mary's love. How do you all do, amanuenses both—marital and sororal ?

C. LAMB.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

TO JOSEPH COTTLE

LETTER CXCVII.]

*Nov.* 5, 1819.

Dear Sir—It is so long since I have seen or heard from you, that I fear that you will consider a request I have to make as impertinent. About three years since, when I was one day in Bristol, I made an effort to see you; but you were from home. The request I have to make is, that you would very much oblige me, if you have any small portrait of yourself, by allowing me to have it copied, to accompany a selection of “Likenesses of Living Bards” which a most particular friend of mine is making. If you have no objections, and could oblige me by transmitting such portrait to me at No. 44 Russell Street, Covent Garden, I will answer for taking the greatest care of it, and returning it safely the instant the copier has done with it. I hope you will pardon the liberty from an old friend and well-wisher,

CHARLES LAMB.

LETTER CXCVIII.]

[*November or December*] 1819.

Dear Sir—My friend, whom you have obliged by the loan of your picture, has had it very exactly copied (and a very spirited drawing it is; so every one thinks who has seen it). The copy is not much inferior, done by a daughter of Josephs, R.A. He purposes sending you

## TO COTTLE

back the original, which I must accompany with my warm thanks, both for that, and your better favour, the Messiah, which I assure you I have read through with great pleasure; the verses have great sweetness, and a New Testament-plainness about them which affected me very much. I could just wish that in page 63 you had omitted the lines 71 and 72, and had ended the period with—

“The willowy brook was there, but that sweet sound—  
*When* to be heard again on Earthly ground?”

Two very sweet lines, and the sense perfect.

And in page 154, line 68,—“I come ordained a world to save”—these words are hardly borne out by the story, and seem scarce accordant with the modesty with which our Lord came to take his common portion among the baptismal candidates. They also anticipate the beauty of John’s recognition of the Messiah, and the subsequent confirmation from the voice and Dove.

You will excuse the remarks of an old brother bard, whose career, though long since pretty well stopped, was coeval in its beginning with your own, and who is sorry his lot has been always to be so distant from you. It is not likely that C. L. will see Bristol again; but, if J. C. should ever visit London, he will be a most welcome visitor to C. L. My sister joins in cordial remembrances. . . .

Dear Sir, yours truly,

CHARLES LAMB.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

LETTER CXCIX.]

*London, India House,*  
[Close of year] 1819.

My dear Sir—I am quite ashamed of not having acknowledged your kind present earlier ; but that unknown something, which was never yet discovered, though so often speculated upon, which stands in the way of lazy folks answering letters, has presented its usual obstacle. It is not forgetfulness nor disrespect nor incivility, but terribly like all these bad things.

I have been in my time a great epistolary scribbler : but the passion, and with it the facility, at length wears out ; and it must be pumped up again by the heavy machinery of duty or gratitude, when it should run free. I have read your “Fall of Cambria” with as much pleasure as I did your “Messiah.” Your Cambrian Poem I shall be tempted to repeat oftenest, as human poems take me in a mood more frequently congenial than divine. The character of Llewellyn pleases me more than anything else, perhaps ; and then some of the lyrical pieces are fine varieties.

It was quite a mistake that I could dislike anything you should write against Lord Byron ; for I have a thorough aversion to his character, and a very moderate admiration of his genius : he is great in so little a way. To be a Poet is to be the Man, not a petty portion of occasional low passion worked up in a permanent form of

## TO COLERIDGE

humanity. Shakspeare has thrust such rubbishly feelings into a corner,—the dark dusky heart of Don John, in the *Much Ado about Nothing*. The fact is, I have not seen your “Expostulatory Epistle” to him. I was not aware, till your question, that it was out. I shall inquire, and get it forthwith.

Southey is in town, whom I have seen slightly ; Wordsworth expected, whom I hope to see much of. I write with accelerated motion ; for I have two or three bothering clerks and brokers about me, who always press in proportion as you seem to be doing something that is not business. I could exclaim a little profanely ; but I think you do not like swearing.

I conclude, begging you to consider that I feel myself much obliged by your kindness ; and shall be most happy at any and at all times to hear from you.

Dear Sir, yours truly,            CHARLES LAMB.

## TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

LETTER CC.]

November 1819.

Dear Coleridge—Your sonnet is capital. The paper is ingenious, only that it split into four parts (besides a side splinter) in the carriage. I have transferred it to the common English paper *manufactured of rags*, for better preserva-

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

tion. I never knew before how the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were written. 'Tis strikingly corroborated by observations on Cats. These domestic animals, put 'em on a rug before the fire, wink their eyes up, and listen to the kettle, and then purr, which is *their* poetry.

On Sunday week we kiss your hands (if they are clean). This next Sunday I have been engaged for some time.

With remembrances to your good host and hostess,

Yours ever,

C. LAMB.

### TO MISS WORDSWORTH

LETTER CCI.]

November 25, 1819.

Dear Miss Wordsworth—You will think me negligent: but I wanted to see more of Willy before I ventured to express a prediction. Till yesterday I had barely seen him—*Virgilium tantum vidi*—but yesterday he gave us his small company to a bullock's heart, and I can pronounce him a lad of promise. He is no pedant, nor bookworm; so far I can answer. Perhaps he has hitherto paid too little attention to other men's inventions, preferring, like Lord Foppington, the "natural sprouts of his own." But he has observation, and seems thoroughly awake. I am ill at remembering other people's *bon mots*,



## TO MISS WORDSWORTH

but the following are a few :—Being taken over Waterloo Bridge, he remarked, that if we had no mountains, we had a fine river at least ; which was a touch of the comparative : but then he added, in a strain which augured less for his future abilities as a political economist, that he supposed they must take at least a pound a week toll. Like a curious naturalist he inquired if the tide did not come up a little salty. This being satisfactorily answered, he put another question, as to the flux and reflux ; which being rather cunningly evaded than artfully solved by that she-Aristotle, Mary,—who muttered something about its getting up an hour sooner and sooner every day,—he sagely replied, “Then it must come to the same thing at last” ; which was a speech worthy of an infant Halley ! The lion in the ‘Change by no means came up to his ideal standard ; so impossible is it for Nature, in any of her works, to come up to the standard of a child’s imagination ! The whelps (lionets) he was sorry to find were dead ; and on particular inquiry, his old friend the ourang-outang had gone the way of all flesh also. The grand tiger was also sick, and expected in no short time to exchange this transitory world for another, or none. But again, there was a golden eagle (I do not mean that of Charing) which did much arride and console him. William’s genius, I take it, leans a little to the figurative ; for, being at play at tricktrack (a kind of minor billiard-

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

table which we keep for smaller wights, and sometimes refresh our own mature fatigues with taking a hand at), not being able to hit a ball he had iterate aimed at, he cried out, "I cannot hit that beast!" Now the balls are usually called men, but he felicitously hit upon a middle term; a term of approximation and imaginative reconciliation; a something where the two ends of the brute matter (ivory), and their human and rather violent personification into men, might meet, as I take it—illustrative of that excellent remark, in a certain preface about imagination, explaining "Like a sea-beast that had crawled forth to sun himself!" Not that I accuse William Minor of hereditary plagiarism, or conceive the image to have come *ex traduce*. Rather he seemeth to keep aloof from any source of imitation, and purposely to remain ignorant of what mighty poets have done in this kind before him; for, being asked if his father had ever been on Westminster Bridge, he answered that he did not know!

It is hard to discern the oak in the acorn, or a temple like St. Paul's in the first stone which is laid; nor can I quite prefigure what destination the genius of William Minor hath to take. Some few hints I have set down, to guide my future observations. He hath the power of calculation, in no ordinary degree for a chit. He combineth figures, after the first boggle, rapidly; as in the tricktrack board, where the

## TO COLERIDGE

hits are figured. At first he did not perceive that 15 and 7 made 22 ; but by a little use he could combine 8 with 25, and 33 again with 16, which approacheth something in kind (far let me be from flattering him by saying in degree) to that of the famous American boy. I am sometimes inclined to think I perceive the future satirist in him, for he hath a sub-sardonic smile which bursteth out upon occasion ; as when he was asked if London were as big as Ambleside ; and indeed no other answer was given, or proper to be given, to so ensnaring and provoking a question. In the contour of the skull, certainly I discern something paternal. But whether in all respects the future man shall transcend his father's fame, Time, the trier of Geniuses, must decide. Be it pronounced peremptorily at present, that Willy is a well-mannered child, and though no great student, hath yet a lively eye for things that lie before him.

Given in haste from my desk at Leadenhall.

Yours, and yours most sincerely,

C. LAMB.

## TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

LETTER CCII.]

*January 10, 1820.*

Dear Coleridge—A letter written in the blood of your poor friend would indeed be of a

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

nature to startle you; but this is nought but harmless red ink, or, as the witty mercantile phrase hath it, clerk's blood. Hang 'em! my brain, skin, flesh, bone, carcase, soul, time is all theirs. The Royal Exchange, Gresham's Folly, hath me body and spirit. I admire some of Lloyd's lines on you, and I admire your postponing reading them. He is a sad tattler; but this is under the rose. Twenty years ago he estranged one friend from me quite, whom I have been regretting, but never could regain since. He almost alienated you also from me, or me from you, I don't know which; but that breach is closed. The "dreary sea" is filled up. He has lately been at work "telling again," as they call it, a most gratuitous piece of mischief, and has caused a coolness betwixt me and (not a friend exactly, but) an intimate acquaintance. I suspect also he saps Manning's faith in me, who am to Manning more than an acquaintance. Still I like his writing verses about you. Will your kind host and hostess give us a dinner next Sunday; and, better still, *not expect us* if the weather is very bad? Why you should refuse twenty guineas per sheet for Blackwood's, or any other magazine, passes my poor comprehension. But, as Strap says, "you know best." I have no quarrel with you about præprandial avocations; so don't imagine one. That Manchester sonnet I think very likely is Capel Lofft's. Another sonnet appeared with the same initials

## TO MISS WORDSWORTH

in the same paper, which turned out to be Procter's. What do the rascals mean? Am I to have the fathering of what idle rhymes every beggarly poetaster pours forth? Who put your marine sonnet, and about Browne, into *Blackwood*?—I did not. So no more, till we meet.

Ever yours,

C. L.

## TO MISS WORDSWORTH

LETTER CCIII.]

[Thursday, May 25, 1820.]

Dear Miss W.—I have volunteered to reply to your note because of a mistake I am desirous of rectifying on the spot. There can be none to whom the last volume of W. W. has come more welcome than to me. I have traced the Duddon in thought and with repetition along the banks (alas!) of the Lea—(unpoetical name): it is always flowing and murmuring in my ears. The story of Dion is divine—the genius of Plato falling on him like moonlight—the finest thing ever expressed.

Then there is *Elidure* and *Kirkstone Pass*—the last not new to me—and let me add one of the sweetest of all to me, *The Longest Day*. Loving all these as much as I can love Poetry, new to me, what could I wish or desire or extravagantly desiderate in a new volume? That I did not write to W. W. was simply that he was to come so soon, and that flattens letters.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

I admired your averted looks on Saturday. You did not observe M. Burney's averted look also? You might have been supposed two Antipathies, or quarrelled lovers. The fact was, M. B. had a black eye he was desirous of concealing—an artificial one I mean, not of nature's making, but of art's reflecting, for nobody quarrels with the black eyes the former gives—but it was curious to see you both ashamed of such Panegyrical objects as black eyes and white teeth have always been considered. . . . Mary is not here to see the stuff I write, else she would snatch the pen out of my hand and conclude with some sober kind messages.

We sincerely wish your brother better.

Yours, both of us kindly,

C. L. and M. L.

### TO THOMAS ALLSOP

LETTER CCIV.]

*March 30, 1821.*

My dear Sir—If you can come next Sunday we shall be equally glad to see you, but do not trust to any of Martin's appointments, except on business, in future. He is notoriously faithless in that point, and we did wrong not to have warned you. Leg of Lamb, as before, hot at 4. And the heart of Lamb ever.

Yours truly,

C. L.

## TO COLERIDGE—GILLMAN

### TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

LETTER CCV.]

*May 1, 1821.*

Dr. C.—I will not fail you on Friday by six, and Mary, perhaps, earlier. I very much wish to meet Master Mathew, and am very much obliged to the Gillmans for the opportunity. Our kind respects to them always,

ELIA.

### TO MR. GILLMAN

LETTER CCVI.]

*Wednesday, May 2, '21.*

Dear Sir—You dine so late on Friday, it will be impossible for us to go home by the eight o'clock stage. Will you oblige me by securing us beds in some house from which a stage goes to the Bank in the morning? I would write to Coleridge, but cannot think of troubling a dying man with such a request.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

If the beds in the town are all engaged, in consequence of Mr. Mathews's appearance, a hackney coach will serve.

We shall neither of us come much before the time.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

TO JOHN PAYNE COLLIER

LETTER CCVII.]

[*Kingsland Row, Dalston,*

*May 16, 1821.*

Dear J. P. C. — Many thanks for the “Decameron”: I have not such a gentleman’s book in my collection: it was a great treat to me, and I got it just as I was wanting something of the sort. I take less pleasure in books than heretofore, but I like books about books. In the second volume, in particular, are treasures—your discoveries about “Twelfth Night,” etc. What a Shakspearian essence that speech of Osrades for food!—Shakspeare is coarse to it—beginning “Forbear and eat no more.” Osrades warms up to that, but does not set out ruffian-swaggerer. The character of the Ass with those three lines, worthy to be set in gilt vellum, and worn in frontlets by the noble beasts for ever—

“Thou would, perhaps, he should become thy foe,  
And to that end dost beat him many times:  
He cares not for himself, much less thy blow.”

Cervantes, Sterne, and Coleridge, have said positively nothing for asses compared with this.

I write in haste; but p. 24, vol. i., the line you cannot appropriate is Gray’s sonnet, specimenified by Wordsworth in first preface to L. B., as mixed of bad and good style: p. 143, 2nd vol., you will find last poem but one of



## TO TAYLOR

the collection on Sidney's death in Spenser,  
the line,

"Scipio, Cæsar, Petrarch of our time."

This fixes it to be Raleigh's: I had guess'd it to be Daniel's. The last after it, "Silence augmenteth rage," I will be crucified if it be not Lord Brooke's. Hang you, and all meddling researchers, hereafter, that by raking into learned dust may find me out wrong in my conjecture!

Dear J. P. C., I shall take the first opportunity of personally thanking you for my entertainment. We are at Dalston for the most part, but I fully hope for an evening soon with you in Russell or Bouverie Street, to talk over old times and books. Remember *us* kindly to Mrs. J. P. C.

Yours very kindly,

CHARLES LAMB.

I write in misery.

*N.B.*—The best pen I could borrow at our butcher's: the ink, I verily believe, came out of the kennel.

## To J. TAYLOR

LETTER CCVIII.]

*July 30, 1821.*

Dear Sir—You will do me injustice if you do not convey to the writer of the beautiful lines, which I now return you, my sense of the

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

extreme kindness which dictated them. Poor Elia (call him *Ellia*) does not pretend to so very clear revelations of a future state of being as Olen seems gifted with. He stumbles about dark mountains at best ; but he knows at least how to be thankful for this life, and is too thankful indeed for certain relationships lent him here, not to tremble for a possible resumption of the gift. He is too apt to express himself lightly, and cannot be sorry for the present occasion, as it has called forth a reproof so Christian-like. His *animus* at least (whatever become of it in the female termination) hath always been *cum Christianis*.

Pray make my gratefulest respects to the Poet (do I flatter myself when I hope it may be Montgomery ?) and say how happy I should feel myself in an acquaintance with him. I will just mention that in the middle of the second column, where I have affixed a cross, the line

“One in a skeleton’s ribb’d hollow coop’d,”

is undoubtedly wrong. Should it not be—

“A skeleton’s rib or ribs ? ”

or,

“In a skeleton ribb’d, hollow-coop’d ? ”

I perfectly remember the plate in Quarles. In the first page esoteric is pronounced esóteric. It should be (if that is the word) esotérico. The

## TO CLARKE

false accent may be corrected by omitting the word *old*. Pray, for certain reasons, give me to the 18th *at furthest extremity* for my next.

Poor ELIA, the real (for I am but a counterfeit), is dead. The fact is, a person of that name, an Italian, was a fellow-clerk of mine at the South-Sea House, thirty (not forty) years ago, when the characters I described there existed, but had left it like myself many years ; and I having a brother now there, and doubting how he might relish certain descriptions in it, I clapt down the name of Elia to it, which passed off pretty well, for Elia himself added the function of an author to that of a scrivener, like myself.

I went the other day (not having seen him for a year) to laugh over with him at my usurpation of his name, and found him, alas ! no more than a name, for he died of consumption eleven months ago, and I knew not of it.

So the name has fairly devolved to me, I think ; and 'tis all he has left me.

Dear Sir, yours truly,

C. LAMB.

Messrs. Taylor & Hessey, Fleet Street,  
for J. Taylor, Esq.

## TO C. COWDEN CLARKE

LETTER CCIX.]

[1821.]

My dear Sir—Your letter has lain in a drawer of my desk, upbraiding me every time

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

I open the said drawer, but it is almost impossible to answer such a letter in such a place, and I am out of the habit of replying to epistles elsewhere than at office. You express yourself concerning Hunt like a true friend, and have made me feel that I have somehow neglected him, but without knowing very well how to rectify it. I live so remote from him—by Hackney—that he is almost out of the pale of visitation at Hampstead. And I come but seldom to Covt. Gardn. this summer time, and when I do, am sure to pay for the late hours and pleasant Novello suppers which I incur. I also am an invalid. But I will hit upon some way, that you shall not have cause for your reproof in future. But do not think I take the hint unkindly. When I shall be brought low by any sickness or untoward circumstance, write just such a letter to some tardy friend of mine—or come up yourself with your friendly Henshaw face—and that will be better. I shall not forget in haste our casual day at Margate. May we have many such there or elsewhere! God bless you for your kindness to H., which I will remember. But do not show Novello this, for the flouting infidel doth mock when Christians cry God bless us. Yours and *his, too*, and all our little circle's most affect<sup>e</sup>.

C. LAMB.

Mary's love included.

## TO COLERIDGE

TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

LETTER CCX.]

*March 9, 1822.*

Dear Coleridge—It gives me great satisfaction to hear that the pig turned out so well : they are interesting creatures at a certain age. What a pity such buds should blow out into the maturity of rank bacon ! You had all some of the crackling and brain sauce. Did you remember to rub it with butter, and gently dredge it a little, just before the crisis ? Did the eyes come away kindly with no Œdipean avulsion ? Was the crackling the colour of the ripe pomegranate ? Had you no complement of boiled neck of mutton before it, to blunt the edge of delicate desire ? Did you flesh maiden teeth in it ? Not that *I* sent the pig, or can form the remotest guess what part Owen could play in the business. I never knew him give anything away in my life. He would not begin with strangers. I suspect the pig, after all, was meant for me ; but at the unlucky juncture of time being absent, the present somehow went round to Highgate. To confess an honest truth, a pig is one of those things which I could never think of sending away. Teal, widgeon, snipes, barn-door fowls, ducks, geese—your tame villatic things—Welsh mutton, collars of brawn, sturgeon, fresh or pickled, your potted char, Swiss cheeses, French pies, early grapes, muscadines, I impart

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

as freely unto my friends as to myself. They are but self-extended ; but pardon me if I stop somewhere. Where the fine feeling of benevolence giveth a higher smack than the sensual rarity, there my friends (or any good man) may command me ; but pigs are pigs, and I myself therein am nearest to myself. Nay, I should think it an affront, an undervaluing done to Nature who bestowed such a boon upon me, it in a churlish mood I parted with the precious gift. One of the bitterest pangs of remorse I ever felt was when a child—when my kind old aunt had strained her pocket-strings to bestow a sixpenny whole plum-cake upon me. In my way home through the Borough I met a venerable old man, not a mendicant, but thereabouts ; a look-beggar, not a verbal petitioner ; and in the coxcombry of taught charity I gave away the cake to him. I walked on a little in all the pride of an Evangelical peacock, when of a sudden my old aunt's kindness crossed me ; the sum it was to her ; the pleasure she had a right to expect that I—not the old impostor—should take in eating her cake ; the ingratitude by which, under the colour of a Christian virtue, I had frustrated her cherished purpose. I sobbed, wept, and took it to heart so grievously, that I think I never suffered the like ; and I was right. It was a piece of unfeeling hypocrisy, and it proved a lesson to me ever after. The cake has long been masticated, consigned to

## TO WORDSWORTH

the dunghill with the ashes of that unseasonable pauper.

But when Providence, who is better to us all than our aunts, gives me a pig, remembering my temptation and my fall, I shall endeavour to act towards it more in the spirit of the donor's purpose.

Yours (short of pig) to command in everything.  
C. L.

## TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

LETTER CCXI.]

*March 20, 1822.*

My dear Wordsworth—A letter from you is very grateful; I have not seen a Kendal postmark so long! We are pretty well, save colds and rheumatics, and a certain deadness to everything, which I think I may date from poor John's loss, and another accident or two at the same time, that have made me almost bury myself at Dalston, where yet I see more faces than I could wish. Deaths upset one, and put one out long after the recent grief. Two or three have died within the last two twelve-months, and so many parts of me have been numbed. One sees a picture, reads an anecdote, starts a casual fancy, and thinks to tell of it to this person in preference to every other: the person is gone whom it would have peculiarly

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

suites. It won't do for another. Every departure destroys a class of sympathies. There's Captain Burney gone! What fun has whist now? What matters it what you lead, if you can no longer fancy him looking over you? One never hears anything, but the image of the particular person occurs with whom alone almost you would care to share the intelligence. Thus one distributes oneself about; and now for so many parts of me I have lost the market. Common natures do not suffice me. Good people, as they are called, won't serve. I want individuals. I am made up of queer points, and I want so many answering needles. The going away of friends does not make the remainder more precious. It takes so much from them as there was a common link. A. B. and C. make a party. A. dies. B. not only loses A.; but all A.'s part in C. C. loses A.'s part in B., and so the alphabet sickens by subtraction of interchangeables. I express myself muddily, *capite dolente*. I have a dulling cold. My theory is to enjoy life, but my practice is against it. I grow ominously tired of official confinement. Thirty years have I served the Philistines, and my neck is not subdued to the yoke. You don't know how wearisome it is to breathe the air of four pent walls without relief, day after day, all the golden hours of the day between ten and four, without ease or interposition. *Tædet me harum quotidianarum formarum*, these pestilential



## TO WORDSWORTH

clerk-faces always in one's dish. Oh for a few years between the grave and the desk!—they are the same, save that at the latter you are the outside machine. The foul enchanter —— (“letters four do form his name”—Busirane is his name in hell), that has curtailed you of some domestic comforts, hath laid a heavier hand on me, not in present infliction, but in taking away the hope of enfranchisement. I dare not whisper to myself a pension on this side of absolute incapacitation and infirmity, till years have sucked me dry ;—*Otium cum indignitate*. I had thought in a green old age (Oh green thought !) to have retired to Ponder's End (emblematic name, how beautiful !), in the Ware Road, there to have made up my accounts with Heaven and the company, toddling about between it and Ches-hunt ; anon stretching, on some fine Izaak Walton morning, to Hoddesdon or Amwell, careless as a beggar ; but walking, walking ever till I fairly walked myself off my legs, dying walking ! The hope is gone. I sit like Philomel all day (but not singing), with my breast against this thorn of a desk, with the only hope that some pulmonary affliction may relieve me. *Vide* Lord Palmerston's report of the clerks in the War Office (Debates in this morning's *Times*), by which it appears, in twenty years as many clerks have been coughed and catarrhed out of it into their freer graves. Thank you for asking about the pictures. Milton hangs

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

over my fire-side in Covent Garden (when I am there) ; the rest have been sold for an old song, wanting the eloquent tongue that should have set them off ! You have gratified me with liking my meeting with Dodd. For the Malvolio story—the thing is become in verity a sad task, and I eke it out with anything. If I could slip out of it I should be happy, but our chief-reputed assistants have forsaken us. The Opium-Eater crossed us once with a dazzling path, and hath as suddenly left us darkling ; and, in short, I shall go on from dull to worse, because I cannot resist the booksellers' importunity—the old plea you know of authors, but I believe on my part sincere. Hartley I do not so often see ; but I never see him in unwelcome hour. I thoroughly love and honour him. I send you a frozen epistle, but it is Winter and dead time of the year with me. May heaven keep something like Spring and Summer up with you, strengthen your eyes, and make mine a little lighter to encounter with them, as I hope they shall yet and again, before all are closed.

Yours, with every kind remembrance.

C. L.

I had almost forgot to say, I think you thoroughly right about presentation copies. I should like to see you print a book I should grudge to purchase for its size. Hang me, but I would have it, though !

## TO GODWIN—CLARE

TO WILLIAM GODWIN

LETTER CCXII.]

*India House, April 13, 1822.*

Dear Godwin—I cannot imagine how you, who never in your writings have expressed yourself disrespectfully of any one but your Maker, can have given offence to Rickman.

I have written to the Numberer of the People to ask when it will be convenient to him to be at home to Mr. Booth. I think it probable he may be out of town in the Parliamentary recess, but doubt not of a speedy answer. Pray return my recognition to Mr. Booth, from whose excellent Tables of Interest I daily receive inexpressible official facilities.

Yours ever,

C. LAMB.

LETTER CCXIII.]

*May 16, 1822.*

Dear Godwin—I sincerely feel for all your trouble. Pray use the enclosed £50, and pay me when you can. I shall make it my business to see you very shortly.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

TO JOHN CLARE

LETTER CCXIV.]

*India House, August 31, 1822.*

Dear Clare—I thank you heartily for your present. I am an inveterate old Londoner, but

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

while I am among your choice collections I seem to be native to them and free of the country. The quality of your observation has astonished me. What have most pleased me have been "Recollections after a Ramble," and those "Grongar Hill" kind of pieces in eight syllable lines, my favourite measure, such as "Cooper Hill" and "Solitude." In some of your story-telling Ballads the provincial phrases sometimes startle me. I think you are too profuse with them. In poetry *slang* of every kind is to be avoided. There is a rustic Cockneyism, as little pleasing as ours of London. Transplant Arcadia to Helpstone. The true rustic style I think is to be found in Shenstone. Would his "Schoolmistress," the prettiest of poems, have been better if he had used quite the Goody's own language? Now and then a home rusticism is fresh and startling; but when nothing is gained in expression, it is out of tenor. It may make folks smile and stare; but the ungenial coalition of barbarous with refined phrases will prevent you in the end from being so generally tasted, as you desire to be. Excuse my freedom, and take the same liberty with my *puns*.

I send you two little volumes of my spare hours. They are of all sorts: there is a Methodist hymn for Sundays and a farce for Saturday night. Pray give them a place on your shelf. Pray accept a little volume, of which I have a duplicate, that I may return in

## TO BARTON

equal number to your welcome presents. I think I am indebted to you for a sonnet in the *London* for August?

Since I saw you I have been in France, and have eaten frogs. The nicest little rabbit things you ever tasted. Do look about for them. Make Mrs. Clare pick off the hind quarters, boil them plain, with parsley and butter. The fore quarters are not so good. She may let them hop off by themselves.

Yours sincerely,

CHAS. LAMB.

## TO BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCXV.]

*India House,  
September 11, 1822.*

Dear Sir—You have misapprehended me sadly, if you suppose that I meant to impute any inconsistency in your writing poetry with your religious profession. I do not remember what I said, but it was spoken sportively, I am sure—one of my levities, which you are not so used to as my older friends. I probably was thinking of the light in which your so indulging yourself would appear to Quakers, and put their objection in my own foolish mouth. I would eat my words (provided they should be written on not very coarse paper) rather than I would throw cold water upon your, and my once, harmless occupation.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

I have read "Napoleon" and the rest with delight. I like them for what they are, and for what they are not. I have sickened on the modern rhodomontade and Byronism, and your plain Quakerish beauty has captivated me. It is all wholesome cates; ay, and toothsome too; and withal Quakerish. If I were George Fox, and George Fox licenser of the press, they should have my absolute *imprimatur*. I hope I have removed the impression.

I am, like you, a prisoner to the desk. I have been chained to that galley thirty years,—a long shot. I have almost grown to the wood. If no imaginative poet, I am sure I am a figurative one. Do "Friends" allow puns? *verbal* equivocations? They are unjustly accused of it; and I did my little best in the "Imperfect Sympathies" to vindicate them. I am very tired of clerking it, but have no remedy. Did you see a Sonnet to this purpose in the *Examiner*?—

"Who first invented work, and bound the free  
And holy-day rejoicing spirit down  
To the ever-haunting importunity  
Of business, in the green fields and the town,  
To plough, loom, anvil, spade; and oh, most sad,  
To that dry drudgery at the desk's dead wood?  
Who but the being unblest, alien from good,  
Sabbathless Satan! he who his unglad  
Task ever plies, 'mid rotatory burnings,  
That round and round incalculably reel;  
For wrath Divine hath made him like a wheel  
In that red realm from which are no returnings;  
Where, toiling and turmoiling, ever and aye,  
He and his thoughts keep pensive worky-day."

## TO MRS. KENNEY

I fancy the sentiment exprest above will be nearly your own. The expression of it probably would not so well suit with a follower of John Woolman. But I do not know whether diabolism is a part of your creed, or where indeed to find an exposition of your creed at all. In feelings and matters not dogmatical, I hope I am half a Quaker. Believe me, with great respect, yours,  
C. LAMB.

I shall always be happy to see or hear from you.

## TO MRS. KENNEY

LETTER CCXVI.]

*London, September 11, 1822.*

Dear Mrs. K.—Mary got home safe on Friday night. She has suffered only a common fatigue, but as she is weakly, begs me to thank you in both our names for all the trouble she has been to you. She did not succeed in saving Robinson's fine waistcoat. They could not comprehend how a waistcoat, marked Henry Robinson, could be a part of Miss Lamb's wearing apparel. So they seized it for the king, who will probably appear in it at the next levee. Next to yourself, our best thanks to H. Payne. I was disappointed he came not with her. Tell Kenney the Cow has got out, by composition, paying so much in the pound. The canary bird continues her sleep-persuading strains. Pray say to Ellen that

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

I think the verses very pretty which she slipt into my pocket on the last day of my being at Versailles. The stanzas on Ambition are fine, allowing for the age of the writer. The thought that the present King of Spain whom I suppose she means by the "brown monarch," sitting in state among his grandees, is like

"A sparrow lonely on the house's top,"

is perhaps a little forced. The next line is better,

"Too high to stoop, though not afraid to drop."

Pray deliver what follows to my dear wife Sophy.

My dear Sophy—the few short days of connubial felicity which I passed with you among the pears and apricots of Versailles were some of the happiest of my life. But they are flown !

And your other half—your dear co-twin—that she-you—that almost equal sharer of my affections : you and she are my better half, a quarter a-piece. She and you are my pretty sixpence—you the head, and she the tail. Sure, Heaven that made you so alike must pardon the error of an inconsiderate moment, should I for love of you, love her too well. Do you think laws were made for lovers ? I think not.

Adieu, amiable Pair, Yours and yours,

C. LAMB.

*P.S.*—I enclose half a dear kiss a-piece for you.



## TO FIELD

TO MR. BARRON FIELD

LETTER CCXVII.]

September 22, 1822.

My dear F.—I scribble hastily at office. Frank wants my letter presently. I and sister are just returned from Paris!! We have eaten frogs. It has been such a treat! You know our monotonous tenor. Frogs are the nicest little delicate things—rabbity-flavoured. Imagine a Lilliputian rabbit! They fricassee them; but in my mind, drest seethed, plain, with parsley and butter, would have been the decision of Apicius. Paris is a glorious picturesque old city. London looks mean and new to it, as the town of Washington would, seen after it. But they have no St. Paul's, or Westminster Abbey. The Seine, so much despised by Cockneys, is exactly the size to run through a magnificent street; palaces a mile long on one side, lofty Edinbro' stone (O the glorious antiques!) houses on the other. The Thames disunites London and Southwark. I had Talma to supper with me. He has picked up, as I believe, an authentic portrait of Shakspeare. He paid a broker about £40 English for it. It is painted on the one half of a pair of bellows,—a lovely picture, corresponding with the folio head. The bellows has old carved *wings* round it, and round the visnomy is inscribed, as near

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

as I remember, not divided into rhyme—I found out the rhyme—

“Whom have we here,  
Stuck on the bellows,  
But the Prince of good fellows,  
Willy Shakspeare?”

At top—

“O base and coward luck  
To be here stuck!”—POINS.

At bottom—

“Nay! rather a glorious lot is to him assign’d,  
Who, like the Almighty, rides upon the *wind*.”  
PISTOL.

This is all in old carved wooden letters. The countenance smiling, sweet, and intellectual beyond measure, even as he was immeasurable. It may be a forgery. They laugh at me and tell me Ireland is in Paris, and has been putting off a portrait of the Black Prince. How far old wood may be imitated I cannot say. Ireland was not found out by his parchments, but by his poetry. I am confident no painter on either side the Channel could have painted anything near like the face I saw. Again, would such a painter and forger have taken £40 for a thing, if authentic, worth £4000? Talma is not in the secret, for he had not even found out the rhymes in the first inscription. He is coming over with it, and, my life to Southey’s Thalaba, it will gain universal faith.

## TO BARTON

The letter is wanted, and I am wanted.  
Imagine the blank filled up with all kind things.  
Our joint hearty remembrances to both of you.  
Yours, as ever, C. LAMB.

## TO BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCXVIII.]

*East India House,  
October 9, 1822.*

Dear Sir—I am ashamed not sooner to have acknowledged your letter and poem. I think the latter very temperate, very serious, and very seasonable. I do not think it will convert the club at Pisa, neither do I think it will satisfy the bigots on our side the water. Something like a parody on the song of Ariel would please them better :—

“ Full fathom five the Atheist lies,  
Of his bones are hell-dice made.”

I want time, or fancy, to fill up the rest. I sincerely sympathise with you on your doleful confinement. Of time, health, and riches, the first in order is not last in excellence. Riches are chiefly good because they give us Time. What a weight of wearisome prison hours have I to look back and forward to, as quite cut out of life ! and the sting of the thing is, that for six hours every day I have no business which I could not contract into two, if they would let

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

me work task-work. I shall be glad to hear that your grievance is mitigated. Shelley I saw once. His voice was the most obnoxious squeak I ever was tormented with, ten thousand times worse than the Laureate's, whose voice is the worst part about him, except his Laureateship. Lord Byron opens upon him on Monday in a parody (I suppose) of the *Vision of Judgment*, in which latter the Poet I think did not much show *his*. To award his Heaven and his Hell in the presumptuous manner he has done, was a piece of immodesty as bad as Shelleyism.

I am returning a poor letter. I was formerly a great scribbler in that way, but my hand is out of order. If I said my head too, I should not be very much out, but I will tell no tales of myself; I will therefore end (after my best thanks, with a hope to see you again some time in London), begging you to accept this letteret for a letter—a leveret makes a better present than a grown hare, and short troubles (as the old excuse goes) are best.

I hear that Lloyd is well, and has returned to his family. I think this will give you pleasure to hear.

I remain, dear Sir, yours truly, C. LAMB.

## TO HAYDON

TO B. R. HAYDON

LETTER CCXIX.]

*India House, October 19, 1822.*

Dear Haydon—Poor Godwin has been turned out of his house and business in Skinner Street, and if he does not pay two years' arrears of rent, he will have the whole stock, furniture, etc., of his new house (in the Strand) seized when term begins. We are trying to raise a subscription for him. My object in writing this is simply to ask you, if this is a kind of case which would be likely to interest Mrs. Coutts in his behalf, and *who*, in your opinion, is the best person to speak with her on his behalf. Without the aid of from £300 to £400 by that time, early in November, he will be ruined. You are the only person I can think of, of his acquaintance, and can perhaps, if not yourself, recommend the person most likely to influence her. Shelley had engaged to clear him of all demands, and he has gone down to the deep insolvent.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

Is Sir Walter to be applied to, and by what channel?

LETTER CCXX.]

*Tuesday [October 29, 1822].*

Dear H.—I have written a very respectful letter to Sir W. S. Godwin did not write,

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

because he leaves all to his Committee, as I will explain to you. If this rascally weather holds you will see but one of us on that day.

Yours, with many thanks,

CHARLES LAMB.

### TO JOHN HOWARD PAYNE

LETTER CCXXI.]

*Thursday, November 1822.*

“Ali Pacha” will do. I sent my sister the first night, not having been able to go myself, and her report of its effect was most favourable. I saw it last night—the third night—and it was most satisfactorily received. I have been sadly disappointed in Talfourd, who does the critiques in the “Times,” and who promised his strenuous services; but by some damn’d arrangement he was sent to the wrong house, and a most iniquitous account of “Ali” substituted for his, which I am sure would have been a kind one. The “Morning Herald” did it ample justice, without appearing to puff it. It is an abominable misrepresentation of the “Times,” that Farren played Ali like Lord Ogilby. He acted infirmity of body, but not of voice or purpose. His manner was even grand. A grand old gentleman. His falling to the earth when his son’s death was announced was fine as anything I ever saw. It was as if he had been blasted. Miss Foote looked helpless and beautiful, and

## TO PAYNE

greatly helped the piece. It is going on steadily, I am sure, for *many nights*. Marry, I was a little disappointed with Hassan, who tells us he subsists by cracking court jests before Hali; but he made none. In all the rest, scenery and machinery, it was faultless. I hope it will bring you here. I should be most glad of that. I have a room for you, and you shall order your own dinner three days in the week. I must retain my own authority for the rest. As far as magazines go, I can answer for Talfourd in the "New Monthly." He cannot be put out there. But it is established as a favourite, and can do without these expletives. I long to talk over with you the Shakspeare Picture. My doubts of its being a forgery mainly rest upon the goodness of the picture. The bellows might be trumped up, but where did the painter spring from? Is Ireland a consummate artist—or any of Ireland's accomplices?—but we shall confer upon it, I hope. The "New Times," I understand was favourable to "Ali," but I have not seen it. I am sensible of the want of method in this letter, but I have been deprived of the connecting organ by a practice I have fallen into since I left Paris, of taking too much strong spirits of a night. I must return to the Hotel de l'Europe and Macon.

How is Kenney? Have you seen my friend White? What is Poole about, etc.? Do not write, but come and answer me.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

The weather is charming, and there is a mermaid to be seen in London. You may not have the opportunity of inspecting such a *Poissarde* once again in ten centuries.

My sister joins me in the hope of seeing you.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

LETTER CCXXII.]

*Wednesday, November 13, '22.*

Dear P.—Owing to the inconvenience of having two lodgings, I did not get your letter quite so soon as I should. The India House is my proper address, where I am sure for the fore part of every day. The instant I got it, I addressed a letter, for Kemble to see, to my friend Henry Robertson, the Treasurer of Covent Garden Theatre. He had a conference with Kemble, and the result is, that Robertson, in the name of the management, recognised to me the full ratifying of your bargain: £250 for “Ali,” the “Slaves,” and another piece which they had not received. He assures me the whole will be paid you, or the proportion for the two former, as soon as ever the Treasury will permit it. He offered to write the same to you, if I pleased. He thinks in a month or so they will be able to liquidate it. He is positive no trick could be meant you, as Mr. Planché’s alterations, which were trifling, were not at all considered as affecting your bargain. With respect to the copyright of “Ali,” he was of opinion no money



## TO PAYNE

would be given for it, as "Ali" is quite laid aside. This explanation being given, you would not think of printing the two copies together by way of recrimination. He told me the secret of the two "Galley Slaves" at Drury Lane. Elliston, if he is informed right, engaged Poole to translate it, but before Poole's translation arrived, finding it coming out at Cov. Gar., he procured copies of two several translations of it in London. So you see here are four translations, reckoning yours. I fear no copyright would be got for it, for anybody may print it and anybody has. Yours has run seven nights, and R. is of opinion it will not exceed in number of nights the nights of "Ali"—about thirteen. But your full right to your bargain with the management is in the fullest manner recognised by him officially. He gave me every hope the money will be spared as soon as they can spare it. He said *a month or two*, but seemed to me to mean about *a month*. A new lady is coming out in Juliet, to whom they look very confidently for replenishing their treasury. Robertson is a very good fellow and I can rely upon his statement. Should you have any more pieces, and want to get a copyright for them, I am the worst person to negotiate with any bookseller, having been cheated by all I have had to do with (except Taylor and Hessey,—but they do not publish theatrical pieces), and I know not how to go about it, or who to apply to. But if

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

you had no better negotiator, I should know the minimum you expect, for I should not like to make a bargain out of my own head, being (after the Duke of Wellington) the worst of all negotiators. I find from Robertson you have written to Bishop on the subject. Have you named anything of the copyright of the "Slaves"? R. thinks no publisher would pay for it, and you would not risk it on your own account. This is a mere business letter, so I will just send my love to my little wife at Versailles, to her dear mother, etc.

Believe me, yours truly,

C. L.

To J. TAYLOR

LETTER CCXXIII.]

December 7, 1822.

Dear Sir—I should like the enclosed Dedication to be printed, unless you dislike it. I like it. It is in the olden style. But if you object to it, put forth the book as it is ; only pray don't let the printer mistake the word *curt* for *curst*.

C. L.

## DEDICATION

TO THE FRIENDLY AND JUDICIOUS READER

who will take these Papers, as they were meant ;  
not understanding everything perversely in its

## TO TAYLOR

absolute and literal sense, but giving fair construction, as to an after-dinner conversation ; allowing for the rashness and necessary incompleteness of first thoughts ; and not remembering, for the purpose of an after taunt, words spoken peradventure after the fourth glass, the Author wishes (what he would will for himself) plenty of good friends to stand by him, good books to solace him, prosperous events to all his honest undertakings, and a candid interpretation to his most hasty words and actions. The other sort (and he hopes many of them will purchase his book too) he greets with the curt invitation of Timon, “Uncover, dogs, and lap” : or he dismisses them with the confident security of the philosopher,—“you beat but on the case of Elia.” On better consideration, pray omit that Dedication. The Essays want no Preface : they are *all Preface*. A Preface is nothing but a talk with the reader ; and they do nothing else. Pray omit it.

There will be a sort of Preface in the next Magazine, which may act as an advertisement, but not proper for the volume.

Let ELIA come forth bare as he was born.

C. L.

Messrs. Taylor and Hessey,  
Booksellers, Fleet Street.

*No Preface.*

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

TO MR. WALTER WILSON

LETTER CCXXIV.]

E. I. H., December 16, 1822.

Dear Wilson—*Lightning* I was going to call you. You must have thought me negligent in not answering your letter sooner. But I have a habit of never writing letters but at the office ; 'tis so much time cribbed out of the Company ; and I am just got out of the thick of a tea-sale, in which most of the entry of notes, deposits, etc., usually falls to my share.

I have nothing of De Foe's but two or three novels and the "Plague History." I can give you no information about him. As a slight general character of what I remember of them (for I have not looked into them latterly), I would say that in the appearance of *truth*, in all the incidents and conversations that occur in them, they exceed any works of fiction I am acquainted with. It is perfect illusion. The *author* never appears in these self-narratives (for so they ought to be called, or rather autobiographies), but the *narrator* chains us down to an implicit belief in everything he says. There is all the minute detail of a log-book in it. Dates are painfully pressed upon the memory. Facts are repeated over and over in varying phases, till you cannot choose but believe them. It is like reading evidence given in a court of justice. So anxious the story-teller seems that

## TO WILSON

the truth should be clearly comprehended, that when he has told us a matter of fact or a motive, in a line or two farther down he *repeats* it, with his favourite figure of speech, "I say," so and so, though he had made it abundantly plain before. This is in imitation of the common people's way of speaking, or rather of the way in which they are addressed by a master or mistress, who wishes to impress something upon their memories, and has a wonderful effect upon matter-of-fact readers. Indeed it is to such principally that he writes. His style is everywhere beautiful, but plain and *homely*. Robinson Crusoe is delightful to all ranks and classes, but it is easy to see that it is written in phraseology peculiarly adapted to the lower conditions of readers; hence it is an especial favourite with seafaring men, poor boys, servant-maids, etc. His novels are capital kitchen-reading, while they are worthy, from their deep interest, to find a shelf in the libraries of the wealthiest and the most learned. His passion for *matter-of-fact narrative* sometimes betrayed him into a long relation of common incidents, which might happen to any man, and have no interest but the intense appearance of truth in them, to recommend them. The whole latter half or two-thirds of "Colonel Jack" is of this description. The beginning of "Colonel Jack" is the most affecting natural picture of a young thief that was ever drawn. His losing the stolen money in the hollow of a

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

tree, and finding it again when he was in despair, and then being in equal distress at not knowing how to dispose of it, and several similar touches in the early history of the Colonel, evince a deep knowledge of human nature ; and putting out of question the superior *romantic* interest of the latter, in my mind very much exceed Crusoe. "Roxana" (first edition) is the next in interest, though he left out the best part of it in subsequent editions from a foolish hyper-criticism of his friend Southerne. But "Moll Flanders," the "Account of the Plague," etc., are all of one family, and have the same stamp of character.

Believe me, with friendly recollections,  
*Brother* (as I used to call you), yours,

C. LAMB.

### TO BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCXXV.]

December 23, 1822.

Dear Sir—I have been so distracted with business and one thing or other, I have not had a quiet quarter of an hour for epistolary purposes. Christmas, too, is come, which always puts a rattle into my morning skull. It is a visiting, unquiet, unquakerish season. I get more and more in love with solitude, and proportionately hampered with company. I hope you have some holidays at this period. I have one day—Christmas Day ; alas ! too few to commemorate

## TO BARTON

the season. All work and no play dulls me. Company is not play, but many times hard work. To play, is for a man to do what he pleases, or to do nothing—to go about soothing his particular fancies. I have lived to a time of life to have outlived the good hours, the nine o'clock suppers, with a bright hour or two to clear up in afterwards. Now you cannot get tea before that hour, and then sit gaping, music-bothered perhaps, till half-past twelve brings up the tray ; and what you steal of convivial enjoyment after, is heavily paid for in the disquiet of to-morrow's head.

I am pleased with your liking *John Woodvil*, and amused with your knowledge of our drama being confined to Shakspeare and Miss Baillie. What a world of fine territory between Land's End and Johnny Groat's have you missed traversing ! I could almost envy you to have so much to read. I feel as if I had read all the books I want to read. O to forget Fielding, Steele, etc, and read 'em new !

Can you tell me a likely place where I could pick up, cheap, Fox's journal ? There are no Quaker circulating libraries ? Elwood, too, I must have. I rather grudge that Southey has taken up the history of your people : I am afraid he will put in some levity. I am afraid I am not quite exempt from that fault in certain magazine articles, where I have introduced mention of them. Were they to do again, I

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

would reform them. Why should not you write a poetical account of your old worthies, deducing them from Fox to Woolman? But I remember you did talk of something in that kind, as a counterpart to the "Ecclesiastical Sketches." But would not a poem be more consecutive than a string of sonnets? You have no martyrs *quite to the fire*, I think, among you; but plenty of heroic confessors, spirit-martyrs, lamb-lions. Think of it; it would be better than a series of sonnets on "Eminent Bankers." I like a hit at our way of life, though it does well for me, better than anything short of *all one's time to one's self*; for which alone I rankle with envy at the rich. Books are good, and pictures are good, and money to buy them therefore good; but to buy *time!* in other words, life!

The "compliments of the time" to you should end my letter; to a Friend, I suppose, I must say the "sincerity of the season"; I hope they both mean the same. With excuses for this hastily-penned note, believe me, with great respect,

C. LAMB.

### TO MISS WORDSWORTH

LETTER CCXXVI.]

Mary perfectly approves of the appropriation of the *feathers*, and wishes them peacock's for your fair niece's sake.



## TO MISS WORDSWORTH

*Christmas 1822.*

Dear Miss Wordsworth—I had just written the above endearing words when Monkhouse tapped me on the shoulder with an invitation to cold goose pie, which I was not bird of that sort enough to decline. Mrs. M——, I am most happy to say, is better. Mary has been tormented with rheumatism, which is leaving her. I am suffering from the festivities of the season. I wonder how my misused carcass holds it out. I have played the experimental philosopher on it, that's certain. Willy shall be welcome to a mince-pie, and a bout at commerce whenever he comes. He was in our eye. I am glad you liked my new year's speculations : everybody likes them, except the author of the *Pleasures of Hope*. Disappointment attend him ! How I like to be liked, and *what I do* to be liked ! They flatter me in magazines, newspapers, and all the minor reviews ; the Quarterlies hold aloof. But they must come into it in time, or their leaves be waste paper. Salute Trinity Library in my name. Two special things are worth seeing at Cambridge, a portrait of Cromwell, at Sydney, and a better of Dr. Harvey (who found out that blood was red), at Dr. Davy's ; you should see them. Coleridge is pretty well. I have not seen him, but hear often of him from Allsop, who sends me hares and pheasants twice a week ; I can hardly take so fast as he gives. I have almost forgotten

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

butcher's meat, as plebeian. Are you not glad the cold is gone? I find Winters not so agreeable as they used to be "when Winter bleak had charms for me." I cannot conjure up a kind similitude for those snowy flakes. Let them keep to twelfth cakes!

Mrs. Paris, our Cambridge friend, has been in town. You do not know the Watfords in Trumpington Street. They are capital people. Ask anybody you meet who is the biggest woman in Cambridge, and I'll hold you a wager they'll say Mrs. Smith. She broke down two benches in Trinity gardens, one on the confines of St. John's, which occasioned a litigation between the Societies as to repairing it. In warm weather she retires into an ice-cellar (literally!) and dates the returns of the years from a hot Thursday some twenty years back. She sits in a room with opposite doors and windows, to let in a thorough draught, which gives her slenderer friends tooth-aches. She is to be seen in the market every morning, at ten, cheapening fowls, which I observe the Cambridge poulterers are not sufficiently careful to stump.

Having now answered most of the points contained in your letter, let me end with assuring you of our very best kindness, and excuse Mary from not handling the pen on this occasion, especially as it has fallen into so much better hands! Will Dr. W. accept of my respects at the end of a foolish letter?

C. L.

## TO DIBDIN

To — DIBDIN, Esq.

LETTER CCXXVII.]

1822.

It is hard when a gentleman cannot remain concealed, who affecteth obscurity with greater avidity than most do seek to have their good deeds brought to light—to have a prying inquisitive finger (to the danger of its own scorching) busied in removing the little peck measure (scripturally a bushel) under which one had hoped to bury his small candle. The receipt of fern-seed, I think, in this curious age, would scarce help a man to walk invisible.

Well, I am discovered—and thou thyself, who thoughtest to shelter under the pease-cod of initiality (a stale and shallow device), art no less dragged to light. Thy slender anatomy—thy skeletonian D—— fleshed and sinewed out to the plump expansion of six characters—thy tuneful genealogy deduced.

By the way, what a name is Timothy! Lay it down, I beseech thee, and in its place take up the properer sound of Timotheus.

Then mayst thou with unblushing fingers handle the lyre “familiar to the D——n name.”

With much difficulty have I traced thee to thy lurking-place. Many a goodly name did I run over, bewildered between Dorrien, and Doxat, and Dover, and Dakin, and Daintry—a wilderness of D’s—till at last I thought I had

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

hit it—my conjectures wandering upon a melancholy Jew—you wot the Israelite upon 'Change—Master Daniels, a contemplative Hebrew, to the which guess I was the rather led by the consideration that most of his nation are great readers.

Nothing is so common as to see them in the Jews' Walk, with a bundle of scrip in one hand and the *Man of Feeling* or a volume of Sterne in the other.

I am a rogue if I can collect what manner of face thou carriest, though thou seemest so familiar with mine. If I remember thou didst not dimly resemble the man Daniels, whom at first I took thee for—a careworn, mortified, economical, commercio-political countenance, with an agreeable limp in thy gait, if Elia mistake thee not. I think I should shake hands with thee, if I met thee.

TO MR. AND MRS. BRUTON

LETTER CCXXVIII.]

January 6, 1823.

The pig was above my feeble praise. It was a dear pigmy. There was some contention as to who should have the ears; but, in spite of his obstinacy (deaf as these little creatures are to advice), I contrived to get at one of them.

It came in boots too, which I took as a

## TO MR. AND MRS. BRUTON

favour. Generally these pretty toes, pretty toes! are missing; but I suppose he wore them to look taller.

He must have been the least of his race. His little foots would have gone into the silver slipper. I take him to have been a Chinese and a female.

If Evelyn could have seen him, he would never have farrowed two such prodigious volumes; seeing how much good can be contained in—how small a compass!

He crackled delicately.

I left a blank at the top of my letter, not being determined which to address it to: so farmer and farmer's wife will please to divide our thanks. May your granaries be full, and your rats empty, and your chickens plump, and your envious neighbours lean, and your labourers busy, and you as idle and as happy as the day is long!

### VIVE L'AGRICULTURE!

How do you make your pigs so little?

They are vastly engaging at the age:

I was so myself.

Now I am a disagreeable old hog,

A middle-aged gentleman-and-a-half,

My faculties (thank God!) are not much impaired.

I have my sight, hearing, taste, pretty perfect; and can read the Lord's Prayer in common type, by the help of a candle, without making many mistakes.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

Believe me, that while my faculties last, I shall ever cherish a proper appreciation of your many kindnesses in this way, and that the last lingering relish of past favours upon my dying memory will be the smack of that little ear. It was the left ear, which is lucky. Many happy returns, not of the pig, but of the New Year, to both ! Mary, for her share of the pig and the memoirs, desires to send the same.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

TO BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCXXIX.]

*January 9, 1823.*

“Throw yourself on the world without any rational plan of support, beyond what the chance employ of booksellers would afford you ! ! !”

Throw yourself rather, my dear sir, from the steep Tarpeian rock, slap-dash headlong upon iron spikes. If you had but five consolatory minutes between the desk and the bed, make much of them, and live a century in them, rather than turn slave to the booksellers. They are Turks and Tartars when they have poor authors at their beck. Hitherto you have been at arm's length from them. Come not within their grasp. I have known many authors for bread, some repining, others envying the blessed security of a counting-house, all agreeing they would

## TO BARTON

rather have been tailors, weavers,—what not, rather than the things they were. I have known some starved, some to go mad, one dear friend literally dying in a workhouse. You know not what a rapacious, dishonest set these booksellers are. Ask even Southey, who (a single case almost) has made a fortune by book drudgery, what he has found them. Oh, you know not (may you never know !) the miseries of subsisting by authorship. 'Tis a pretty appendage to a situation like yours or mine ; but a slavery, worse than all slavery, to be a bookseller's dependant, to drudge your brains for pots of ale and breasts of mutton, to change your free thoughts and voluntary numbers for ungracious task-work. Those fellows hate *us*. The reason I take to be, that contrary to other trades, in which the master gets all the credit (a jeweller or silversmith for instance), and the journeyman, who really does the fine work, is in the background,—in *our* work the world gives all the credit to us, whom *they* consider as *their* journeymen, and therefore do they hate us, and cheat us, and oppress us, and would wring the blood of us out, to put another sixpence in their mechanic pouches ! I contend that a bookseller has a *relative honesty* towards authors, not like his honesty to the rest of the world. B., who first engaged me as “Elia,” has not paid me up yet (nor any of us without repeated mortifying appeals), yet how the knave fawned when I was of service to him !

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

Yet I dare say the fellow is punctual in settling his milk-score, etc.

Keep to your bank, and the bank will keep you. Trust not to the public ; you may hang, starve, drown yourself, for anything that worthy *personage* cares. I bless every star that Providence, not seeing good to make me independent, has seen it next good to settle me upon the stable foundation of Leadenhall. Sit down, good B. B., in the banking-office. What ! is there not from six to eleven P.M. six days in the week, and is there not all Sunday ? Fie, what a superfluity of man's time, if you could think so !—enough for relaxation, mirth, converse, poetry, good thoughts, quiet thoughts. Oh the corroding, torturing, tormenting thoughts, that disturb the brain of the unlucky wight who must draw upon it for daily sustenance ! Henceforth I retract all my fond complaints of mercantile employment ; look upon them as lovers' quarrels. I was but half in earnest. Welcome dead timber of a desk, that makes me live. A little grumbling is a wholesome medicine for the spleen ; but in my inner heart do I approve and embrace this our close but unharassing way of life. I am quite serious. If you can send me Fox, I will not keep it *six weeks*, and will return it, with warm thanks to yourself and friend, without blot or dog's ear. You will much oblige me by this kindness.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.



## TO PAYNE

TO J. HOWARD PAYNE

LETTER CCXXX.]

January 23, '23.

Dear Payne—I have no mornings (my day begins at 5 P.M.) to transact business in, or talents for it, so I employ Mary, who has seen Robertson, who says that the Piece which is to be Operafied was sent to you six weeks since by a Mr. Hunter, whose journey has been delayed, but he supposes you have it by this time. On receiving it back properly done, the rest of your dues will be forthcoming. You have received £30 from Harwood, I hope? Bishop was at the theatre when Mary called, and he has put your other piece into C. Kemble's hands (the piece you talk of offering Elliston) and C. K. sent down word that he had not yet had time to read it. So stand your affairs at present. Glossop has got the "Murderer." Will you address him on the subject, or shall I—that is, Mary? She says you must write more *showable* letters about these matters, for, with all our trouble of crossing out this word, and giving a cleaner turn to th' other, and folding down at this part, and squeezing an obnoxious epithet into a corner, she can hardly communicate their contents without offence. What, man, put less gall in your ink, or write me a biting tragedy!

C. LAMB.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

TO BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCXXXI.]

February 17, 1823.

My dear Sir—I have read quite through the ponderous folio of George Fox. I think Sewell has been judicious in omitting certain parts, as for instance where G. F. *has* revealed to him the natures of all the creatures in their names, as Adam had. He luckily turns aside from that compendious study of natural history, which might have superseded Buffon, to his proper spiritual pursuits, only just hinting what a philosopher he might have been. The ominous passage is near the beginning of the book. It is clear he means a physical knowledge, without trope or figure. Also, pretences to miraculous healing, and the like, are more frequent than I should have suspected from the epitome in Sewell. He is nevertheless a great spiritual man, and I feel very much obliged by your procuring me the loan of it. How I like the Quaker phrases!—though I think they were hardly completed till Woolman. A pretty little manual of Quaker language (with an endeavour to explain them) might be gathered out of his book. Could not you do it? I have read through G. F. without finding any explanation of the term *first volume* in the title-page. It takes in all, both his life and his death. Are there more last words of him? Pray how may

## TO BARTON

I return it to Mr. Sewell at Ipswich? I fear to send such a treasure by a stage-coach; not that I am afraid of the coachman or the guard's *reading it*; but it might be lost. Can you put me in a way of sending it in safety? The kind-hearted owner trusted it to me for six months; I think I was about as many days in getting through it, and I do not think that I skipped a word of it. I have quoted G. F. in my "Quaker's Meeting," as having said he was "lifted up in spirit" (which I felt at the time to be not a Quaker phrase), "and the judge and jury were as dead men under his feet." I find no such words in his journal, and I did not get them from Sewell, and the latter sentence I am sure I did not mean to invent: I must have put some other Quaker's words into his mouth. Is it a fatality in me, that everything I touch turns into "a lie"? I once quoted two lines from a translation of Dante, which Hazlitt very greatly admired, and quoted in a book as proof of the stupendous power of that poet; but no such lines are to be found in the translation, which has been searched for the purpose. I must have dreamed them, for I am quite certain I did not forge them knowingly. What a misfortune to have a lying memory! Yes, I have seen Miss Coleridge, and wish I had just such a—daughter. God love her! To think she should have had to toil through five octavos of that cursed (I forget I write to a Quaker) Abbeypony History, and then

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

to abridge them to three, and all for £113!—at her years to be doing stupid Jesuits' Latin into English, when she should be reading or writing romances! Heaven send her uncle do not breed her up a Quarterly Reviewer! which reminds me that he has spoken very respectfully of you in the last Number, which is the next thing to having a Review all to one's self. Your description of Mr. Mitford's place makes me long for a pippin and some caraways, and a cup of sack in his orchard, when the sweets of the night come in.

Farewell,

C. LAMB.

TO J. HOWARD PAYNE

LETTER CCXXXII.]

*February 1823.*

My dear Miss Lamb—I have enclosed for you Mr. Payne's piece called "Grandpapa," which I regret to say is not thought to be of the nature that will suit this theatre; but as there appears to be much merit in it, Mr. Kemble strongly recommends that you should send it to the English Opera House, for which it seems to be excellently adapted. As you have already been kind enough to be our medium of communication with Mr. Payne, I have imposed this trouble upon you; but if you do not like to act for Mr. Payne in the business, and have no means of disposing of the piece, I

## TO PAYNE

will forward it to Paris or elsewhere as you think he may prefer.

Very truly yours, HENRY ROBERTSON.

T. R. C. G., Feb. 8, 1823.

Dear P—— We have just received the above, and want your instructions. It strikes me as a very merry little piece, that should be played by *very young actors*. It strikes me that Miss Clara Fisher would play the *boy* exactly. She is just such a forward chit. No young *man* would do it without its appearing absurd, but in a girl's hands it would have just all the reality that a short drama of an act requires. Then for the sister, if Miss Stevenson that was were Miss Stevenson and younger, they two would carry it off. I do not know who they have got in that young line, besides Miss C. F., at Drury, nor how you would like Elliston to have it—has he not had it? I am thick with Arnold, but I have always heard that the very slender profits of the English Opera House do not admit of his giving above a trifle, or next to none, for a piece of this kind. Write me what I should do, what you would ask, etc. The music (printed) is returned with the piece, and the French original. Tell Mr. Grattan I thank him for his book, which as far as I have read it is a very *companionable one*. I have but just received it. It came the same hour with your packet from Cov. Gar., *i.e.* yester - night late, to my summer residence,

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

where, tell Kenney, the cow is quiet. Love to all at Versailles. Write quickly. C. L.

I have no acquaintance with Kemble at all, having only met him once or twice ; but any information, etc., I can get from R., who is a good fellow, you may command. I am sorry the rogues are so dilatory, but I distinctly believe they mean to fulfil their engagement. I am sorry you are not here to see to these things. I am a poor man of business, but command me to the short extent of my tether. My sister's kind remembrance ever. C. L.

### To WALTER WILSON

LETTER CCXXXIII.]

*February 24, 1823.*

Dear W.—I write that you may not think me neglectful, not that I have anything to say. In answer to your questions, it was at your house I saw an edition of “Roxana,” the preface to which stated that the author had left out that part of it which related to Roxana's daughter persisting in imagining herself to be so, in spite of the mother's denial, from certain hints she had picked up, and throwing herself continually in her mother's way (as Savage is said to have done in his, prying in at windows to get a glimpse of her), and that it was by advice of

## TO WILSON

Southern, who objected to the circumstances as being untrue, when the rest of the story was founded on fact ; which shows S. to have been a stupid-ish fellow. The incidents so resemble Savage's story, that I taxed Godwin with taking Falkner from his life by Dr. Johnson. You should have the edition (if you have not parted with it), for I saw it never but at your place at the Mews' Gate, nor did I then read it to compare it with my own ; only I know the daughter's curiosity is the best part of *my* "Roxana." The prologue you speak of was mine, and so named, but not worth much. You ask me for two or three pages of verse. I have not written so much since you knew me. I am altogether prosaic. May be I may touch off a sonnet in time. I do not prefer "Colonel Jack" to either "Robinson Crusoe" or "Roxana." I only spoke of the beginning of it, his childish history. The rest is poor. I do not know anywhere any good character of De Foe besides what you mention. I do not know that Swift mentions him ; Pope does. I forget if D'Israeli has. Dunlop I think has nothing of him. He is quite new ground, and scarce known beyond "Crusoe." I do not know who wrote "Quarl." I never thought of "Quarl" as having an author. It is a poor imitation ; the monkey is the best in it, and his pretty dishes made of shells. Do you know the paper in the *Englishman* by Sir Richard Steele, giving an account of Selkirk ?

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

It is admirable, and has all the germs of "Crusoe." You must quote it entire. Captain G. Carleton wrote his own Memoirs; they are about Lord Peterborough's campaign in Spain, and a good book. "Puzzelli" puzzles me, and I am in a cloud about "Donald M'Leod." I never heard of them; so you see, my dear Wilson, what poor assistances I can give in the way of information. I wish your book out, for I shall like to see anything about De Foe, or from you.

Your old friend, C. LAMB.

From my and your old compound.

### TO BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCXXXIV.]

March 5, 1823.

Dear Sir—You must think me ill-mannered not to have replied to your first letter sooner, but I have an ugly habit of aversion from letter writing, which makes me an unworthy correspondent. I have had no spring, or cordial call to the occupation of late. I have been not well lately, which must be my lame excuse. Your Poem, which I consider very affecting, found me engaged about a humorous Paper for the *London*, which I had called "A Letter to an *Old Gentleman* whose education had been neglected"—and when it was done Taylor and Hessey would not print it, and it discouraged



## TO BARTON

me from doing anything else ; so I took up Scott, where I had scribbled some petulant remarks, and for a make-shift father'd them on Ritson. It is obvious I could not make your Poem a part of them ; and as I did not know whether I should ever be able to do to my mind what you suggested, I thought it not fair to keep back the verses for the chance. Mr. Mitford's Sonnet I like very well ; but as I also have my reasons against interfering at all with the Editorial arrangement of the *London*, I transmitted it (not in my own handwriting) to them, who I doubt not will be glad to insert it. What eventual benefit it can be to you (otherwise than that a kind man's wish is a benefit) I cannot conjecture. Your Society are eminently men of business, and will probably regard you as an idle fellow, possibly disown you ; that is to say, if you had put your own name to a Sonnet of that sort ; but they cannot excommunicate Mr. Mitford ; therefore I thoroughly approve of printing the said verses. When I see any Quaker names to the Concert of Ancient Music, or as Directors of the British Institution, or bequeathing medals to Oxford for the best classical themes, etc., then I shall begin to hope they will emancipate you. But what as a Society can they do for you ? You would not accept a commission in the army, nor they be likely to procure it. Posts in Church or State have they none in their giving ; and then, if

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

they disown you,—think—you must live “a man forbid.”

I wished for you yesterday. I dined in Parnassus, with Wordsworth, Coleridge, Rogers, and Tom Moore,—half the poetry of England constellated and clustered in Gloucester Place ! It was a delightful evening. Coleridge was in his finest vein of talk—had all the talk ; and let 'em talk as evilly as they do of the envy of poets, I am sure not one there but was content to be nothing but a listener. The Muses were dumb while Apollo lectured on his and their fine art. It is a lie that poets are envious. I have known the best of them, and can speak to it, that they give each other their merits, and are the kindest critics as well as best authors. I am scribbling a muddy epistle with an aching head, for we did not quaff Hippocrene last night ; marry, it was Hippocrass rather. Pray accept this as a letter in the meantime, and do me the favour to mention my respects to Mr. Mitford, who is so good as to entertain good thoughts of Elia, but don't show this almost impertinent scrawl. I will write more respectfully next time, for believe me, if not in words, in feelings yours most so,

C. L.

LETTER CCXXXV.]

*March 11, 1823.*

Dear Sir—The approbation of my little book by your sister is very pleasing to me. The

## TO BARTON

Quaker incident did not happen to me, but to Carlisle the surgeon, from whose mouth I have twice heard it, at an interval of ten or twelve years, with little or no variation, and have given it as exactly as I could remember it. The gloss which your sister or you have put upon it does not strike me as correct. Carlisle drew no inference from it against the honesty of the Quakers, but only in favour of their surpassing coolness ; that they should be capable of committing a good joke, with an utter insensibility to its being any jest at all. I have reason to believe in the truth of it, because, as I have said, I heard him repeat it without variation at such an interval. The story loses sadly in print, for Carlisle is the best story-teller I ever heard. The idea of the discovery of roasting pigs I also borrowed, from my friend Manning, and am willing to confess both my plagiarisms. Should fate ever so order it that you shall be in town with your sister, mine bids me say, that she shall have great pleasure in being introduced to her. I think I must give up the cause of the Bank ; from 9 to 9 is galley slavery, but I hope it is but temporary. Your endeavour at explaining Fox's insight into the natures of animals must fail, as I shall transcribe the passage. It appears to me that he stopt short in time, and was on the brink of falling with his friend Naylor, my favourite. The book shall be forthcoming whenever your friend can make convenient to call for it.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

They have dragged me again into the Magazine, but I feel the spirit of the thing in my own mind quite gone. "Some brains" (I think Ben Jonson says it) "will endure but one skimming." We are about to have an inundation of poetry from the Lakes: Wordsworth and Southey are coming up strong from the North. The She Coleridges have taken flight, to my regret. With Sara's own-made acquisitions, her unaffectedness and no-pretensions are beautiful. You might pass an age with her without suspecting that she knew anything but her mother's tongue. I don't mean any reflections on Mrs. Coleridge here. I had better have said her vernacular idiom. Poor C., I wish he had a home to receive his daughter in; but he is but as a stranger or a visitor in this world.

How did you like Hartley's sonnets? The first, at least, is vastly fine. I am ashamed of the shabby letters I send, but I am by nature anything but neat. Therein my mother bore me no Quaker. I never could seal a letter without dropping the wax on one side, besides scalding my fingers. I never had a seal, too, of my own. Writing to a great man lately, who is moreover very heraldic, I borrowed a seal of a friend, who by the female side quarters the Protectorial arms of Cromwell. How they must have puzzled my correspondent! My letters are generally charged as double at the Post Office, from their inveterate clumsiness of

## TO PAYNE

foldure ; so you must not take it disrespectful to yourself if I send you such ungainly scraps. I think I lose £100 a year at the India House, owing solely to my want of neatness in making up accounts. How I puzzle 'em out at last is the wonder. I have to do with millions !!

It is time to have done my incoherences.

Believe me, yours truly, C. LAMB.

## TO J. HOWARD PAYNE

LETTER CCXXXVI.]

1823.

Dear Payne — Your little books are most acceptable. 'Tis a delicate edition. They are gone to the binder's. When they come home I shall have two—the “Camp” and “Patrick's Day”—to read for the first time. I may say three, for I never read the “School for Scandal.” “*Seen* it I have, and in its happier days.” With the books Harwood left a truncheon or mathematical instrument, of which we have not yet ascertained the use. It is like a telescope, but unglazed. Or a ruler, but not smooth enough. It opens like a fan, and discovers a frame such as they weave lace upon at Lyons and Chambery. Possibly it is from those parts. I do not value the present the less for not being quite able to detect its purport. When I can find any one coming your way I have a volume for you, my

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

Elias collected. Tell Poole, his Cockney in the Lon. Mag. tickled me exceedingly. Harwood is to be with us this evening with Fanny, who comes to introduce a literary lady, who wants to see me,—and whose portentous name is *Plura*, in English, “many things.” Now, of all God’s creatures, I detest letters-affecting, authors-hunting ladies. But Fanny “will have it so.” So Miss Many-Things and I are to have a conference, of which you shall have the result. I dare say she does not play at whist. Treasurer Robertson, whose coffers are absolutely swelling with pantomimic receipts, called on me yesterday to say he is going to write to you, but if I were also, I might as well say that your last bill is at the Banker’s, and will be honored on the instant receipt of the third Piece, which you have stipulated for. If you have any such in readiness, strike while the iron is hot, before the Clown cools. Tell Mrs. Kenney, that the Miss F. H. (or H. F.) Kelly, who has begun so splendidly in Juliet, is the identical little Fanny Kelly, who used to play on their green before their great Lying-Inn Lodgings at Bayswater. Her career has stopt short by the injudicious bringing her out in a vile new Tragedy, and for a third character in a stupid old one,—the “Earl of Essex.” This is Macready’s doing, who taught her. Her recitation, etc. (*not her voice or person*), is masculine. It is so clever, it seemed a male *Debût*. But cleverness is the bane of Female

## TO PAYNE

Tragedy especially. Passions uttered logically, etc. It is bad enough in men-actors. Could you do nothing for little Clara Fisher? Are there no French Pieces with a Child in them? By Pieces I mean here dramas, to prevent male-constructions. Did not the Blue Girl remind you of some of Congreve's women? Angelica or Millamant? To me she was a vision of Genteel Comedy realised. Those kind of people never come to see one. *N'import*—haven't I Miss Many-Things coming? Will you ask Horace Smith to——[*The remainder of this letter has been lost.*]

LETTER CCXXXVII.]

1823.

Dear Payne—A friend and fellow-clerk of mine, Mr. White (a good fellow), coming to your parts, I would fain have accompanied him, but am forced instead to send a part of me, verse and prose, most of it from 20 to 30 years old, such as I then was, and I am not much altered.

Paris, which I hardly knew whether I liked when I was in it, is an object of no small magnitude with me now. I want to be going to the Jardin des Plantes (is that right, Louisa?) with you—to Pere la Chaise, La Morgue, and all the sentimentalities. How is Talma, and his (my) dear Shakspeare?

*N.B.* — My friend White knows Paris

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

thoroughly, and does not want a guide. We did, and had one. We both join in thanks. Do you remember a Blue-Silk Girl (English) at the Luxembourg, that did not much seem to attend to the Pictures, who fell in love with you, and whom I fell in love with—an inquisitive, prying, curious Beauty—where is she?

*Votre Très Humble Serviteur,*

CHARLOIS AGNEAU,

*alias C. LAMB.*

Guichy is well, and much as usual. He seems blind to all the distinctions of life, except to those of sex. Remembrance to Kenney and Poole.

TO B. W. PROCTER

LETTER CCXXXVIII.]

*April 13, 1823.*

Dear Lad—You must think me a brute beast, a rhinoceros, never to have acknowledged the receipt of your precious present. But indeed I am none of those shocking things, but have arrived at that indisposition to letter-writing which would make it a hard exertion to write three lines to a king to spare a friend's life: whether it is that the Magazine paying me so much a page I am loath to throw away composition. How much a sheet do you give your correspondents? I have hung up Pope, and a



## TO PROCTER

gem it is, in my town room ; I hope for your approval. Though it accompanies the *Essay on Man*, I think that was not the poem he is here meditating. He would have looked up, somehow affectedly, if he were just conceiving "Awake, my St. John." Neither is he in the *Rape of the Lock* mood exactly. I think he has just made out the last lines of the "Epistle to Jervis," between gay and tender,

"And other beauties envy Worsley's eyes."

I'll be d . . . 'd if that isn't the line. He is brooding over it, with a dreamy phantom of Lady Mary floating before him. He is thinking which is the earliest possible day and hour that she will first see it. What a miniature piece of gentility it is! Why did you give it me? I do not like you enough to give you anything so good.

I have dined with T. Moore and breakfasted with Rogers, since I saw you ; have much to say about them when we meet, which I trust will be in a week or two. I have been over-watched and over-poeted since Wordsworth has been in town. I was obliged for health's sake to wish him gone, but now he is gone I feel a great loss. I am going to Dalston to recruit, and have serious thoughts of altering my condition, that is, of taking to sobriety. What do you advise me ?

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

Rogers spake very kindly of you, as everybody does, and none with so much reason as your

C. L.

TO MISS HUTCHINSON

LETTER CCXXXIX.]

*April 25, 1823.*

Dear Miss H.—Mary has such an invincible reluctance to any epistolary exertion, that I am sparing her a mortification by taking the pen from her. The plain truth is, she writes such a pimping, mean, detestable hand, that she is ashamed of the formation of her letters. There is an essential poverty and abjectness in the frame of them. They look like begging letters. And then she is sure to omit a most substantial word in the second draught (for she never ventures an epistle without a foul copy first), which is obliged to be interlined ; which spoils the neatest epistle, you know. Her figures, 1, 2, 3, 4, etc., where she has occasion to express numerals, as in the date (25th April 1823), are not figures, but figurantes ; and the combined posse go staggering up and down shameless, as drunkards in the day-time. It is no better when she rules her paper. Her lines “are not less erring” than her words. A sort of unnatural parallel lines, that are perpetually threatening to meet ; which, you know, is quite

## TO MISS HUTCHINSON

contrary to Euclid. Her very blots are not bold like this [*here a large blot is inserted*], but poor smears, half left in and half scratched out, with another smear left in their place. I like a clear letter ; a bold free hand, and a fearless flourish. Then she has always to go through them (a second operation) to dot her *i*'s and cross her *t*'s. I don't think she can make a corkscrew if she tried, which has such a fine effect at the end or middle of an epistle, and fills up.

There is a corkscrew !—one of the best I ever drew. By the way, what incomparable whisky that was of Monkhouse's ! But if I am to write a letter, let me begin, and not stand flourishing, like a fencer at a fair.

*April 25, 1823.*

Dear Miss H.—It gives me great pleasure (the letter now begins) to hear that you got down so smoothly, and that Mrs. Monkhouse's spirits are so good and enterprising. It shows, whatever her posture may be, that her mind at least is not supine. I hope the excursion will enable the former to keep pace with its outstripping neighbour. Pray present our kindest wishes to her and all (that sentence should properly have come into the Postscript, but we airy mercurial spirits, there is no keeping us in). “Time” (as was said of one of us) “toils after

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

us in vain." I am afraid our co-visit with Coleridge was a dream. I shall not get away before the end (or middle) of June, and then you will be frog-hopping at Boulogne; and besides, I think the Gillmans would scarce trust him with us; I have a malicious knack at cutting of apron-strings. The Saints' days you speak of have long since fled to heaven, with Astræa, and the cold piety of the age lacks fervour to recall them; only Peter left his key—the iron one of the two that "shuts amain"—and that is the reason I am locked up. Meanwhile of afternoons we pick up primroses at Dalston, and Mary corrects me when I call 'em cow-slips. God bless you all; and pray remember me euphoni-ously to Mr. Gruvellegan. That Lee Priory must be a dainty bower. Is it built of flints?—and does it stand at Kingsgate?

TO BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCXL.]

May 3, 1823.

Dear Sir—I am vexed to be two letters in your debt, but I have been quite out of the vein lately. A philosophical treatise is wanting, of the causes of the backwardness with which persons after a certain time of life set about writing a letter. I always feel as if I had nothing to say, and the performance generally

## TO BARTON

justifies the presentiment. Taylor and Hessey did foolishly in not admitting the sonnet. Surely it might have followed the B. B. I agree with you in thinking Bowring's paper better than the former. I will inquire about my letter to the old gentleman, but I expect it to *go in*, after those to the young gentleman are completed.

I do not exactly see why the goose and little goslings should emblematised a *Quaker poet that has no children*. But, after all, perhaps it is a pelican. The "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin" around it I cannot decipher. The songster of the night pouring out her effusions amid a silent meeting of madge-owlets, would be at least intelligible. A full pause here comes upon me, as if I had not a word more left. I will shake my brain, Once ! Twice !—nothing comes up. George Fox recommends waiting on these occasions. I wait. Nothing comes. G. Fox—that sets me off again. I have finished the "Journal," and 400 more pages of the "*Doctrinals*," which I picked up for 7s. 6d. If I get on at this rate, the society will be in danger of having two Quaker poets to patronise. I am at Dalston now ; but if when I go back to Covent Garden I find thy friend has not called for the "Journal," thee must put me in the way of sending it ; and if it should happen the lender of it, knowing that volume, has not the other, I shall be most happy in his accepting the "*Doctrinals*," which I shall

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

read but once certainly. It is not a splendid copy, but perfect, save a leaf of Index.

I cannot but think that the *London* drags heavily. I miss Janus. And oh how it misses Hazlitt! Procter too is affronted.

Believe me cordially yours, C. LAMB.

To J. B. DIBDIN

LETTER CCXLI.]

May 6, 1823.

Dear Sir—Your verses were very pleasant, and I shall like to see more of them—I do not mean *addressed to me*.

I do not know whether you live in town or country, but if it suits your convenience I shall be glad to see you some evening—say Thursday—at 20 Great Russell Street, Covent Garden. If you can come do not trouble yourself to write. We are old-fashioned people who *drink tea* at six, or not much later, and give cold mutton and pickle at nine, the good old hour. I assure you (if it suit you) we shall be glad to see you.

Yours, etc.

C. LAMB.

My love to Mr. Railton, the same to Mr. Rankin, to the whole Firm indeed.

*E. I. H., Tuesday,  
Some day of May 1823.  
Not official.*

# TO HONE

TO WILLIAM HONE

LETTER CCXLII.]

E. I. H., May 19, '23.

Dear Sir—I have been very agreeably entertained with your present, which I found very curious and amusing. What wiseacres our forefathers appear to have been! It should make *us* thankful, who are grown so rational and polite. I should call to thank you for the book, but go home to Dalston at present. I shall beg your acceptance (when I see you) of my little book. I have Ray's *Collections of English Words not generally Used*, 1691; and in page 60 ("North Country words") occurs "*Rynt ye*"—"by your leave," "stand handsomely." As, "*Rynt you, witch*," quoth Besse Locket to her mother; Proverb, Cheshire.—Doubtless this is the "*Aroint*" of Shakspeare.

In the same collection I find several Shakspearisms. "*Rooky*" wood: a Northern word for "*reeky*," "*misty*," etc. "*Shandy*," a north country word for "*wild*." Sterne was York.

Yours obliged,

C. LAMB.

I am at 14, Kingsland Row, Dalston. Will you take a walk over on Sunday? We dine exactly at 4, and shall be most glad to see you. If I don't hear from you (by note to E. I. Ho.) I will expect you.

Mr. Hone, 45, Ludgate Hill.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

TO CHARLES LLOYD

LETTER CCXLIII.]

1823.

Your lines are not to be understood reading on one leg. They are sinuous, and to be won with wrestling. I do assure you in sincerity that nothing you have done has given me greater satisfaction. Your obscurity, where you are dark, which is seldom, is that of too much meaning, not the painful obscurity which no toil of the reader can dissipate; not the dead vacuum and floundering place in which imagination finds no footing: it is not the dimness of positive darkness, but of distance; and he that reads and not discerns must get a better pair of spectacles. I admire every piece in the collection. I cannot say the first is best: when I do so, the last read rises up in judgment. To your Mother, to your Sister (is Mary dead?), they are all weighty with thought and tender with sentiment. Your poetry is like no other. Those cursed dryads and pagan trumperies of modern verse have put me out of conceit of the very name of poetry. Your verses are as good and as wholesome as prose, and I have made a sad blunder if I do not leave you with an impression that your present is rarely valued.

CHARLES LAMB.



## TO BARTON

TO BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCXLIV.]

July 10, 1823.

Dear Sir—I shall be happy to read the MS. and to forward it ; but T[aylor] and H[essey] must judge for themselves of publication. If it prove interesting (as I doubt not) I shall not spare to say so, you may depend upon it. Suppose you direct it to Accountant's Office, India House. I am glad you have met with some sweetening circumstances to your unpalatable draught. I have just returned from Hastings, where are exquisite views and walks, and where I have given up my soul to walking, and I am now suffering sedentary contrasts. I am a long time reconciling to town after one of these excursions. Home is become strange, and will remain so yet a while ; home is the most unforgiving of friends, and always resents absence ; I know its old cordial looks will return, but they are slow in clearing up. That is one of the features of this *our* galley slavery ; that peregrination ended makes things worse. I felt out of water (with all the sea about me) at Hastings ; and just as I had learned to domiciliate there, I must come back to find a home which is no home. I abused Hastings, but learned its value. There are spots, inland bays, etc., which realise the notions of Juan Fernandez. The best thing I lit upon by accident was a small country

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

church (by whom or when built unknown), standing bare and single in the midst of a grove, with no house or appearance of habitation within a quarter of a mile, only passages diverging from it through beautiful woods to so many farm-houses. There it stands like the first idea of a church, before parishioners were thought of, nothing but birds for its congregation; or like a hermit's oratory (the hermit dead), or a mausoleum; its effect singularly impressive, like a church found in a desert isle to startle Crusoe with a home image. You must make out a vicar and a congregation from fancy, for surely none come there; yet it wants not its pulpit, and its font, and all the seemly additaments of *our* worship.

Southey has attacked "Elia" on the score of infidelity, in the *Quarterly* article, "Progress of Infidelity." I had not, nor have seen the *Monthly*. He might have spared an old friend such a construction of a few careless flights, that meant no harm to religion. If all *his* unguarded expressions on the subject were to be collected——! But I love and respect Southey, and will not retort. I hate his review, and his being a reviewer. The hint he has dropped will knock the sale of the book on the head, which was almost at a stop before. Let it stop,—there is corn in Egypt, while there is cash at Leadenhall. You and I are something besides being writers, thank God!

Yours truly,

C. L.

## TO ALLSOP—BARTON

To THOMAS ALLSOP

LETTER CCXLV.]

*E. I. House, August 9, 1823.*

My dear A.—I am going to ask you to do me the greatest favour which a man can do for another. I want to make my will, and to leave my property in trust for my Sister. *N.B.*—I am not therefore going to die.—Would it be unpleasant for you to be named for one? The other two I shall beg the same favour of are Talfourd and Procter. If you feel reluctant, tell me, and it shan't abate one jot of my friendly feeling toward you.

Yours ever,

C. LAMB.

To BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCXLVI.]

*September 2, 1823.*

Dear B. B.—What will you say to my not writing? You cannot say I do not write now. Hessey has not used your kind sonnet, nor have I seen it. Pray send me a copy. Neither have I heard any more of your friend's MS., which I will reclaim whenever you please. When you come London-ward you will find me no longer in Covent Garden. I have a cottage in Colebrook Row, Islington; a cottage, for it is detached; a white house, with six good rooms;

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

the New River (rather elderly by this time) runs (if a moderate walking pace may be so termed) close to the foot of the house ; and behind is a spacious garden with vines (I assure you), pears, strawberries, parsnips, leeks, carrots, cabbages, to delight the heart of old Alcinous. You enter without passage into a cheerful dining-room, all studded over and rough with old books : and above is a lightsome drawing-room, three windows, full of choice prints. I feel like a great lord, never having had a house before.

The *London*, I fear, falls off. I linger among its creaking rafters, like the last rat ; it will topple down if they don't get some buttresses. They have pulled down three : Hazlitt, Procter, and their best stay, kind, light-hearted Wainwright, their Janus. The best is, neither of our fortunes is concerned in it.

I heard of you from Mr. Pulham this morning, and that gave a fillip to my laziness, which has been intolerable ; but I am so taken up with pruning and gardening, quite a new sort of occupation to me. I have gathered my jargonels, but my Windsor pears are backward. The former were of exquisite raciness. I do now sit under my own vine, and contemplate the growth of vegetable nature. I can now understand in what sense they speak of father Adam. I recognise the paternity while I watch my tulips. I almost fell with him, for the first

## TO HOOD

day I turned a drunken gardener (as he let in the serpent) into my Eden, and he laid about him, lopping off some choice boughs, etc., which hung over from a neighbour's garden, and in his blind zeal laid waste a shade, which had sheltered their window from the gaze of passers-by. The old gentlewoman (fury made her not handsome) could scarcely be reconciled by all my fine words. There was no buttering her parsnips. She talked of the law. What a lapse to commit on the first day of my happy "garden-state" !

I hope you transmitted the Fox-Journal to its owner, with suitable thanks. Mr. Cary, the Dante-man, dines with me to-day. He is a model of a country parson, lean (as a curate ought to be), modest, sensible, no obtruder of church dogmas, quite a different man from Southey. You would like him. Pray accept this for a letter, and believe me, with sincere regards,

Yours,

C. L.

## TO THOMAS HOOD

LETTER CCXLVII.]

[Late in 1823.]

And what dost thou at the Priory? *Cucullus non facit Monachum*. English me that, and challenge old Lignum Janua to make a better.

My old New River has presented no extra-

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

ordinary novelties lately ; but there Hope sits every day, speculating upon traditionary gudgeons. I think she has taken the fisheries. I now know the reason why our forefathers were denominated East and West Angles. Yet is there no lack of spawn ; for I wash my hands in fishets that come through the pump every morning thick as motelings,—little things that perish untimely, and never taste the brook. You do not tell me of those romantic land bays that be as thou goest to Lover's Seat : neither of that little churchling in the midst of a wood (in the opposite direction, nine furlongs from the town), that seems dropped by the Angel that was tired of carrying two packages ; marry, with the other he made shift to pick his flight to Loretto. Inquire out, and see my little Protestant Loretto. It stands apart from trace of human habitation ; yet hath it pulpit, reading-desk, and trim font of massiest marble, as if Robinson Crusoe had reared it to soothe himself with old church-going images. I forget its Christian name, and what she-saint was its gossip.

You should also go to No. 13, Standgate Street,—a baker, who has the finest collection of marine monsters in ten sea counties,—sea dragons, polypi, mer-people, most fantastic. You have only to name the old gentleman in black (not the Devil) that lodged with him a week (he'll remember) last July, and he will

## TO ALLSOP

show courtesy. He is by far the foremost of the savans. His wife is the funniest thwarting little animal ! They are decidedly the Lions of green Hastings. Well, I have made an end of my say. My epistolary time is gone by when I could have scribbled as long (I will not say as agreeable) as thine was to both of us. I am dwindled to notes and letterets. But, in good earnest, I shall be most happy to hail thy return to the waters of Old Sir Hugh. There is nothing like inland murmurs, fresh ripples, and our native minnows.

“He sang in meads how sweet the brooklets ran,  
To the rough ocean and red restless sands.”

I design to give up smoking ; but I have not yet fixed upon the equivalent vice. I must have *quid pro quo* ; or *quo pro quid*, as Tom Woodgate would correct me. My service to him.

C. L.

## TO THOMAS ALLSOP

LETTER CCXLVIII.]

September 10, 1823.

My dear A.—Your kindness in accepting my request no words of mine can repay. It has made you overflow into some romance which I should have check'd at another time. I hope it may be in the scheme of Providence that my sister may go first (if ever so little a precedence),

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

myself next, and my good Executors survive to remember us with kindness many years. God bless you.

I will set Procter about the will forthwith.

C. LAMB.

### TO BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCXLIX.]

*September 17, 1823.*

Dear Sir—I have again been reading your “Stanzas on Bloomfield,” which are the most appropriate that can be imagined,—sweet with Doric delicacy. I like that,—

“Our own more chaste Theocritus”—

just hinting at the fault of the Grecian. I love that stanza ending with,

“Words, phrases, fashions, pass away ;  
But truth and nature live through all.”

But I shall omit in my own copy the one stanza which alludes to Lord B. I suppose. It spoils the sweetness and oneness of the feeling. Cannot we think of Burns, or Thomson, without sully the thought with a reflection out of place upon Lord Rochester? These verses might have been inscribed upon a tomb; are in fact an epitaph; satire does not look pretty upon a tombstone. Besides, there is a quotation in it,



## TO BARTON

always bad in verse, seldom advisable in prose. I doubt if their having been in a paper will not prevent T. and H. from insertion ; but I shall have a thing to send in a day or two, and shall try them. Omitting that stanza, a very little alteration is wanting in the beginning of the next. You see, I use freedom. How happily (I flatter not) you have brought in his subjects ; and (I suppose) his favourite measure, though I am not acquainted with any of his writings but the *Farmer's Boy*. He dined with me once, and his manners took me exceedingly.

I rejoice that you forgive my long silence. I continue to estimate my own-roof comforts highly. How could I remain all my life a lodger ! My garden thrives (I am told), though I have yet reaped nothing but some tiny salad and withered carrots. But a garden's a garden anywhere, and twice a garden in London.

Somehow I cannot relish that word "Horkey." Cannot you supply it by circumlocution, and direct the reader by a note to explain that it means the Horkey. But Horkey chokes me in the text. It raises crowds of mean associations, hawking and sp——g, gawky, stalky, mawkin ! The sound is everything, in such dulcet modulations 'specially. I like

"Gilbert Meldrum's sterner tones,"

without knowing who Gilbert Meldrum is. You have slipt in your rhymes as if they grew

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

there, so natural-artificially, or artificial-naturally. There's a vile phrase !

Do you go on with your "Quaker Sonnets" ? Have 'em ready with Southey's "Book of the Church." I meditate a letter to S. in the *London*, which perhaps will meet the fate of the Sonnet.

Excuse my brevity, for I write painfully at office, liable to a hundred callings off; and I can never sit down to an epistle elsewhere. I read or walk. If you return this letter to the Post Office, I think they will return fourpence, seeing it is but half a one. Believe me, though,

Entirely yours,

C. L.

### TO THOMAS ALLSOP

LETTER CCL.]

1823.

Dear A.—Your Cheese is the best I ever tasted ; Mary will tell you so hereafter. She is at home, but has disappointed me. She has gone back rather than improved. However, she has sense enough to value the present ; for she is greatly fond of Stilton. Yours is the delicatest, rainbow-hued, melting piece I ever flavoured. Believe me, I took it the more kindly, following so great a kindness.

Depend upon't, yours shall be one of the first

## TO CARY—DIBDIN

houses we shall present ourselves at, when we have got our Bill of Health.

Being both yours and Mrs. Allsop's truly,  
C. L. and M. L.

## TO REV. H. F. CARY

LETTER CCLI.]

*India Office, October 14, 1823.*

Dear Sir—If convenient, will you give us house room on Saturday next? I can sleep anywhere. If another Sunday suit you better, pray let me know. We were talking of Roast *Shoulder* of Mutton with onion sauce; but I scorn to prescribe to the hospitalities of mine host.

With respects to Mrs. C., yours truly,  
C. LAMB.

## TO J. B. DIBDIN

LETTER CCLII.]

*October 28, 1823.*

My dear Sir—Your Pig was a *picture* of a pig, and your Picture a pig of a picture. The former was delicious but evanescent, like a hearty fit of mirth, or the crackling of thorns under a pot; but the latter is an *idea*, and abideth. I never before saw swine upon satin. And then that pretty strawy canopy about him!

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

he seems to purr (rather than grunt) his satisfaction. Such a gentlemanlike porker too ! Morland's are absolutely clowns to it. Who the deuce painted it ? I have ordered a little gilt shrine for it, and mean to wear it for a locket—a shirt-pig.

I admire the pretty toes shrouded in a veil of something, not *mud* but that warm soft consistency which the dust takes in Elysium after a spring shower—it perfectly engloves him.

I cannot enough thank you and your country friend for the delicate double present—the *utile et decorum*.

(Three times have I attempted to write this sentence and failed, which shows that I am not cut out for a pedant.)

Sir !—as I say to Southey—Will you come and see us at our poor cottage of Colebrook to tea to-morrow evening, as early as six ? I have some friends coming at that hour.

The panoply which covered your material pig shall be forthcoming. The pig pictorial with its trappings domesticate with me.

Your greatly obliged ELIA.

J. B. Dibdin, Esq.,  
Messrs. Rankings,  
113 Cheapside.

## TO SOUTHEY

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

LETTER CCLIII.]

*E. I. H., November 21, 1823.*

Dear Southey—The kindness of your note has melted away the mist which was upon me. I have been fighting against a shadow. That accursed *Q. R.* had vexed me by a gratuitous speaking, of its own knowledge, that the *Confessions of a D——d* was a genuine description of the state of the writer. Little things, that are not ill-meant, may produce much ill. *That* might have injured me alive and dead. I am in a public office, and my life is insured. I was prepared for anger, and I thought I saw, in a few obnoxious words, a hard case of repetition directed against me. I wished both magazine and review at the bottom of the sea. I shall be ashamed to see you, and my sister (though innocent) will be still more so; for the folly was done without her knowledge, and has made her uneasy ever since. My guardian angel was absent at that time.

I will muster up courage to see you, however, any day next week (Wednesday excepted). We shall hope that you will bring Edith with you. That will be a second mortification. She will hate to see us; but come and heap embers. We deserve it; I for what I've done, and she for being my sister.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

Do come early in the day, by sun-light, that you may see my *Milton*.

I am at Colebrook Cottage, Colebrook Row, Islington: a detached whitish house, close to the New River end of Colebrook Terrace, left hand from Sadler's Wells.

Will you let me know the day before?

Your penitent,

C. LAMB.

*P.S.*—I do not think your handwriting at all like \*\*\*\*'s. I do not think many things I did think.

### TO BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCLIV.]

*November 22, 1823.*

Dear B. B.—I am ashamed at not acknowledging your kind little poem, which I must needs like much; but I protest I thought I had done it at the moment. Is it possible a letter has miscarried? Did you get one in which I sent you an extract from the poems of Lord Stirling? I should wonder if you did, for I sent you none such. There was an incipient lie strangled in the birth. Some people's conscience is so tender! But, in plain truth, I thank you very much for the verses. I have a very kind letter from the Laureate, with a self-invitation to come and shake hands with me. This is truly handsome and noble. 'Tis

## TO BARTON

worthy of my old idea of Southey. Shall not I, think you, be covered with a red suffusion?

You are too much apprehensive of your complaint: I know many that are always ailing of it, and live on to a good old age. I know a merry fellow (you partly know him) who, when his medical adviser told him he had drunk away all *that part*, congratulated himself (now his liver was gone) that he should be the longest liver of the two.

The best way in these cases is to keep yourself as ignorant as you can, as ignorant as the world was before Galen, of the entire inner construction of the animal man; not to be conscious of a midriff; to hold kidneys (save of sheep and swine) to be an agreeable fiction; not to know whereabouts the gall grows; to account the circulation of the blood an idle whimsey of Harvey's; to acknowledge no mechanism not visible. For, once fix the seat of your disorder, and your fancies flux into it like bad humours. Those medical gentries choose each his favourite part; one takes the lungs, another the aforesaid liver, and refer to that whatever in the animal economy is amiss. Above all, use exercise, take a little more spirituous liquors, learn to smoke, continue to keep a good conscience, and avoid tampering with hard terms of art—viscosity, scirrhusity, and those bugbears by which simple patients are scared into their graves. Believe the general sense of the mercantile world, which

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

holds that desks are not deadly. It is the mind, good B. B., and not the limbs, that taints by long sitting. Think of the patience of tailors ! Think how long the Lord Chancellor sits ! Think of the brooding hen ! I protest I cannot answer thy sister's kind inquiry ; but I judge, I shall put forth no second volume. More praise than buy ; and T. and H. are not particularly disposed for martyrs. Thou wilt see a funny passage, and yet a true history, of George Dyer's aquatic incursion in the next *London*. Beware his fate, when thou comest to see me at my Colebrook Cottage. I have filled my little space with my little thoughts. I wish thee ease on thy sofa ; but not too much indulgence on it. From my poor desk, thy fellow-sufferer, this bright November,

C. L.

TO MRS. HAZLITT

LETTER CCLV.]

[*November 1823.*]

Dear Mrs. H.—Sitting down to write a letter is such a painful operation to Mary, that you must accept me as her proxy. You have seen our house. What I now tell you is literally true. Yesterday week George Dyer called upon us, at one o'clock (*bright noonday*), on his way to dine with Mrs. Barbauld at Newington. He sat with Mary about half an hour, and took



## TO MRS. HAZLITT

leave. The maid saw him go out, from her kitchen window, but suddenly losing sight of him, ran up in a fright to Mary. G. D., instead of keeping the slip that leads to the gate, had deliberately, staff in hand, in broad open day, marched into the New River. He had not his spectacles on, and you know his absence. Who helped him out they can hardly tell, but between 'em they got him out, drenched thro' and thro'. A mob collected by that time, and accompanied him in. "Send for the Doctor," they said : and a one-eyed fellow, dirty and drunk, was fetched from the public-house at the end, where it seems he lurks, for the sake of picking up water practice ; having formerly had a medal from the Humane Society for some rescue. By his advice the patient was put between blankets ; and when I came home at 4 to dinner, I found G. D. a-bed, and raving, light-headed, with the brandy and water which the doctor had administered. He sang, laughed, whimpered, screamed, babbled of guardian angels, would get up and go home ; but we kept him there by force ; and by next morning he departed sober, and seems to have received no injury. All my friends are open-mouth'd about having paling before the river ; but I cannot see, that because a lunatic chooses to walk into a river with his eyes open at midday, I am any the more likely to be drowned in it, coming home at midnight.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

I had the honour of dining at the Mansion House on Thursday last by special card from the Lord Mayor, who never saw my face, nor I his ; and all from being a writer in a magazine. The dinner costly, served on massy plate ; champagne, pines, etc. ; 47 present, among whom the Chairman and two other directors of the India Company.

There's for you ! and got away pretty sober. Quite saved my credit.

We continue to like our house prodigiously.

Does Mary Hazlitt go on with her novel ? or has she begun another ? I would not discourage her, though we continue to think it (so far) in its present state not saleable. Our kind remembrances to her and hers, and you and yours.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

I am pleased that H. liked my letter to the Laureate.

Mrs. Hazlitt,  
Alphington, near Exeter.

### TO MR. AINSWORTH

LETTER CCLVI.] *India House, December 9, 1823.*

Dear Sir—I should have thanked you for your books and compliments sooner, but have been waiting for a revise to be sent, which does

## TO AINSWORTH

not come, though I returned the proof on the receipt of your letter. I have read Warner with great pleasure. What an elaborate piece of alliteration and antithesis! why it must have been a labour far above the most difficult versification. There is a fine simile or picture of Semiramis arming to repel a siege. I do not mean to keep the book, for I suspect you are forming a curious collection, and I do not pretend to anything of the kind. I have not a black-letter book among mine, old Chaucer excepted, and am not bibliomaniac enough to like black-letter. It is painful to read; therefore I must insist on returning it at opportunity, not from contumacy and reluctance to be obliged, but because it must suit you better than me. The loss of a present *from* should never exceed the gain of a present *to*. I hold this maxim infallible in the accepting line. I read your magazines with satisfaction. I thoroughly agree with you as to "The German Faust," as far as I can do justice to it from an English translation. 'Tis a disagreeable canting tale of seduction, which has nothing to do with the spirit of Faustus—Curiosity. Was the dark secret to be explored to end in the seducing of a weak girl, which might have been accomplished by earthly agency? When Marlow gives *his* Faustus a mistress, he flies him at Helen, flower of Greece, to be sure, and not at Miss Betsy, or Miss Sally Thoughtless.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

“Cut is the branch that bore the goodly fruit,  
And wither'd is Apollo's laurel tree :  
Faustus is dead.”

What a noble natural transition from metaphor to plain speaking ! as if the figurative had flagged in description of such a loss, and was reduced to tell the fact simply.

I must now thank you for your very kind invitation. It is not out of prospect that I may see Manchester some day, and then I will avail myself of your kindness. But holidays are scarce things with me, and the laws of attendance are getting stronger and stronger at Leadenhall. But I shall bear it in mind. Meantime something may (more probably) bring you to town, where I shall be happy to see you. I am always to be found (alas !) at my desk in the fore part of the day.

I wonder why they do not send the revise. I leave late at office, and my abode lies out of the way, or I should have seen about it. If you are impatient, perhaps a line to the printer, directing him to send it me, at Accountant's Office, may answer. You will see by the scrawl that I only snatch a few minutes from intermitting business.

Your obliged servant,

C. LAMB.

(If I had time I would go over this letter again, and dot all my *i*'s.)

## TO AINSWORTH

LETTER CCLVII.]

*I. H., December 29, 1823.*

My dear Sir—You talk of months at a time, and I know not what inducements to visit Manchester, Heaven knows how gratifying ! but I have had my little month of 1823 already. It is all over ; and without incurring a disagreeable favour I cannot so much as get a single holiday till the season returns with the next year. Even our half-hour's absences from office are set down in a book ! Next year, if I can spare a day or two of it, I will come to Manchester ; but I have reasons at home against longer absences.

I am so ill just at present (an illness of my own procuring last night ; who is perfect ?) that nothing but your very great kindness could make me write. I will bear in mind the letter to W. W., and you shall have it quite in time, before the 12th.

My aching and confused head warns me to leave off. With a muddled sense of gratefulness, which I shall apprehend more clearly to-morrow, I remain, your friend unseen, C. L.

Will your occasions or inclination bring you to London ? It will give me great pleasure to show you everything that Islington can boast, if you know the meaning of that very Cockney sound. We have the New River ! I am ashamed of this scrawl ; but I beg you to accept it for the present. I am full of qualms.

“A fool at fifty is a fool indeed.”

## CHAPTER V

1824—1827

### LETTERS TO BERNARD BARTON AND OTHERS

#### TO BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCLVIII.]

*January 9, 1824.*

Dear B. B.—Do you know what it is to succumb under an unsurmountable day-mare,—“a whoreson lethargy,” Falstaff calls it,—an indisposition to do anything, or to be anything,—a total deadness and distaste, a suspension of vitality,—an indifference to locality,—a numb, soporifical good-for-nothingness,—an ossification all over,—an oyster-like insensibility to the passing events,—a mind-stupor,—a brawny defiance to the needles of a thrusting-in conscience? Did you ever have a very bad cold, with a total irresolution to submit to water-gruel processes. This has been for many weeks my lot and my excuse. My fingers drag heavily over this paper, and to my thinking it is three-and-twenty

## TO BARTON

furlongs from here to the end of this demi-sheet. I have not a thing to say ; nothing is of more importance than another ; I am flatter than a denial or a pancake ; emptier than Judge Park's wig when the head is in it ; duller than a country stage when the actors are off it ; a cipher, an o ! I acknowledge life at all, only by an occasional convulsional cough, and a permanent phlegmatic pain in the chest. I am weary of the world ; life is weary of me. My day is gone into twilight, and I don't think it worth the expense of candles. My wick hath a thief in it, but I can't muster courage to snuff it. I inhale suffocation ; I can't distinguish veal from mutton ; nothing interests me. 'Tis twelve o'clock, and Thurtell is just now coming out upon the New Drop, Jack Ketch alertly tucking up his greasy sleeves to do the last office of mortality ; yet cannot I elicit a groan or a moral reflection. If you told me the world will be at an end to-morrow, I should just say, "Will it ?" I have not volition enough to dot my *i*'s, much less to comb my eyebrows ; my eyes are set in my head ; my brains are gone out to see a poor relation in Moorfields, and they did not say when they'd come back again ; my skull is a Grub Street attic, to let—not so much as a joint-stool or a crack'd jordan left in it ; my hand writes, not I, from habit, as chickens run about a little when their heads are off. O for a vigorous fit of gout, cholic, toothache,—an

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

earwig in my auditory, a fly in my visual organs ! Pain is life—the sharper, the more evidence of life ; but this apathy, this death ! Did you ever have an obstinate cold,—a six or seven weeks' unintermitting chill and suspension of hope, fear, conscience, and everything ? Yet do I try all I can to cure it ; I try wine, and spirits, and smoking, and snuff in unsparing quantities ; but they all only seem to make me worse, instead of better. I sleep in a damp room, but it does me no good ; I come home late o' nights, but do not find any visible amendment ! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?

It is just fifteen minutes after twelve. Thurtell is by this time a good way on his journey, baiting at Scorpion perhaps ; Ketch is bargaining for his cast coat and waistcoat. The Jew demurs at first at three half-crowns ; but, on consideration that he may get somewhat by showing 'em in the town, finally closes.

C. L.

LETTER CCLIX.]

*January 23, 1824.*

My dear Sir—That peevish letter of mine, which was meant to convey an apology for my incapacity to write, seems to have been taken by you in too serious a light ; it was only my way of telling you I had a severe cold. The fact is, I have been insuperably dull and lethargic for



## TO BARTON

many weeks, and cannot rise to the vigour of a letter, much less an essay. The *London* must do without me for a time, for I have lost all interest about it ; and whether I shall recover it again I know not. I will bridle my pen another time, and not teaze and puzzle you with my aridities. I shall begin to feel a little more alive with the Spring. Winter is to me (mild or harsh) always a great trial of the spirits. I am ashamed not to have noticed your tribute to Woolman, whom we love so much. It is done in your good manner. Your friend Taylor called upon me some time since, and seems a very amiable man. His last story is painfully fine. His book I like ; it is only too stuffed with Scripture, too parsonish. The best thing in it is the boy's own story. When I say it is too full of Scripture, I mean it is too full of direct quotations. No book can have too much of silent Scripture in it ; but the natural power of a story is diminished when the uppermost purpose in the writer seems to be to recommend something else, viz. Religion. You know what Horace says of the *Deus intersit*. I am not able to explain myself,—you must do it for me. My sister's part in the "Leicester School" (about two-thirds) was purely her own ; as it was (to the same quantity) in the "Shakespeare Tales" which bear my name. I wrote only the "Witch Aunt" ; the "First Going to Church" ; and the final story, about "A little Indian Girl" in a ship. Your account of my

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

black-balling amused me. *I think, as Quakers, they did right.* There are some things hard to be understood. The more I think, the more I am vexed at having puzzled you with that letter ; but I have been so out of letter-writing of late years, that it is a sore effort to sit down to it ; and I felt in your debt, and sat down waywardly to pay you in bad money. Never mind my dulness ; I am used to long intervals of it. The heavens seem brass to me ; then again comes the refreshing shower—

“I have been merry once or twice ere now.”

You said something about Mr. Mitford in a late letter, which I believe I did not advert to. I shall be happy to show him my Milton (it is all the show things I have) at any time he will take the trouble of a jaunt to Islington. I do also hope to see Mr. Taylor there some day. Pray say so to both. Coleridge's book is in good part printed, but sticks a little for *more copy*. It bears an unsaleable title, “Extracts from Bishop Leighton” ; but I am confident there will be plenty of good notes in it, more of Bishop Coleridge than Leighton, I hope ; for what is Leighton ? Do you trouble yourself about libel cases ? The decision against Hunt for the “Vision of Judgment” made me sick. What is to become of the good old talk about our good old King ?—his personal virtues saving us from a revolution, etc. etc. ! Why, none that think

## TO OLLIER

can utter it now. It must stink. And the "vision" is really, as to him-ward, such a tolerant, good-humoured thing. What a wretched thing a Lord Chief Justice is, always was, and will be !

Keep your good spirits up, dear B. B. ; mine will return ; they are at present in abeyance ; but I am rather lethargic than miserable. I don't know but a good horsewhip would be more beneficial to me than physic. My head, without aching, will teach yours to ache. It is well I am getting to the conclusion. I will send a better letter when I am a better man. Let me thank you for your kind concern for me (which I trust will have reason soon to be dissipated), and assure you that it gives me pleasure to hear from you.

Yours truly,

C. L.

## TO CHARLES OLLIER

LETTER CCLX.]

[January 27, 1824.]

Dear Ollier—Many thanks from both of us for *Inesilla*. I wished myself younger, that I might have more enjoyed the terror of that desolate city, and the damned palace. I think it as fine as anything in its way, and wish you joy of success, etc.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

With better weather, I shall hope to see you at Islington.

Meantime, believe me, yours truly,

C. LAMB.

Scribbled midst official flurry.

### TO BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCLXI.]

*February 25, 1824.*

My dear Sir—Your title of “Poetic Vigils” arrides me much more than a Volume of Verse, which is no meaning. The motto says nothing, but I cannot suggest a better. I do not like mottoes but where they are singularly felicitous ; there is foppery in them. They are unplain, un-Quakerish. They are good only where they flow from the title, and are a kind of justification of it. There is nothing about watchings or lucubrations in the one you suggest ; no commentary on vigils. By the way, a wag would recommend you to the line of Pope,

“Sleepless himself—to give his readers sleep.”

I by no means wish it ; but it may explain what I mean,—that a neat motto is child of the title. I think “Poetic Vigils” as short and sweet as can be desired ; only have an eye on the proof, that the printer do not substitute Virgils, which would ill accord with your modesty or meaning.

## TO BARTON

Your suggested motto is antique enough in spelling, and modern enough in phrases,—a good modern antique ; but the matter of it is germane to the purpose, only supposing the title proposed a vindication of yourself from the presumption of authorship. The first title was liable to this objection—that if you were disposed to enlarge it, and the bookseller insisted on its appearance in two tomes, how oddly it would sound, “A Volume of Verse in Two Volumes, Second Edition,” etc. You see through my wicked intention of curtailing this epistolet by the above device of large margin. But in truth the idea of letterising has been oppressive to me of late above your candour to give me credit for. There is Southey, whom I ought to have thanked a fortnight ago for a present of the “Church Book”: I have never had courage to buckle myself in earnest even to acknowledge it by six words ; and yet I am accounted by some people a good man ! How cheap that character is acquired ! Pay your debts, don’t borrow money, nor twist your kitten’s neck off, nor disturb a congregation, etc., your business is done. I know things (thoughts or things, thoughts *are* things) of myself, which would make every friend I have fly me as a plague patient. I once \* \* \*, and set a dog upon a crab’s leg that was shoved out under a mass of sea-weeds,—a pretty little feeler. Oh pah ! how sick I am of that ! and a lie, a mean one, I once told !—I stink in

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

the midst of respect. I am much hypt. The fact is, my head is heavy, but there is hope ; or if not, I am better than a poor shell-fish ; not morally, when I set the whelp upon it, but have more blood and spirits. Things may turn up, and I may creep again into a decent opinion of myself. Vanity will return with sunshine. Till then, pardon my neglects, and impute it to the wintry solstice.

C. LAMB.

LETTER CCLXII.]

March 24, 1824.

Dear B. B.—I hasten to say that if my opinion can strengthen you in your choice, it is decisive for your acceptance of what has been so handsomely offered. I can see nothing injurious to your most honourable sense. Think that you are called to a poetical Ministry—nothing worse : the Minister is worthy of the hire. The only objection I feel is founded on a fear that the acceptance may be a temptation to you to let fall the bone (hard as it is) which is in your mouth, and must afford tolerable pickings, for the shadow of independence. You cannot propose to become independent on what the low state of interest could afford you from such a principal as you mention ; and the most graceful excuse for the acceptance would be, that it left you free to your voluntary functions. That is the less *light* part of the scruple. It has no darker shade. I put in *darker* because of the

## TO BARTON

ambiguity of the word "light," which Donne, in his admirable poem on the Metempsychosis, has so ingeniously illustrated in his invocation—

"Make my *dark*<sup>1</sup> *heavy*<sup>2</sup> poem, *light*<sup>1</sup> and *light*<sup>2</sup>,"

where the two senses of *light* are opposed to different opposites. A trifling criticism. I can see no reason for any scruple then but what arises from your own interest ; which is in your own power, of course, to solve. If you still have doubts, read over Sanderson's *Cases of Conscience*, and Jeremy Taylor's *Ductor Dubitantium* ; the first a moderate octavo, the latter a folio of 900 close pages ; and when you have thoroughly digested the admirable reasons *pro* and *con* which they give for every possible case, you will be—— just as wise as when you began. Every man is his own best casuist ; and after all, as Ephraim Smooth, in the pleasant comedy of *Wild Oats*, has it, "there is no harm in a Guinea." *A fortiori* there is less in 2000.

I therefore most sincerely congratulate with you, excepting so far as excepted above. If you have fair prospects of adding to the principal, cut the Bank ; but in either case do not refuse an honest service. Your heart tells you it is not offered to bribe you *from* any duty, but *to* a duty which you feel to be your vocation. Farewell heartily.

C. L.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

LETTER CCLXIII.]

April 1824.

Dear B. B.—I am sure I cannot fill a letter, though I should disfurnish my skull to fill it; but you expect something, and shall have a notelet. Is Sunday, not divinely speaking, but humanly and holidaysically, a blessing? Without its institution, would our rugged task-masters have given us a leisure day, so often, think you, as once in a month? or, if it had not been instituted, might they not have given us every sixth day? Solve me this problem. If we are to go three times a-day to church, why has Sunday slipped into the notion of a *holliday*? A *Holyday* I grant it. The Puritans, I have read in Southey's book, knew the distinction. They made people observe Sunday rigorously, would not let a nursery-maid walk out in the fields with children for recreation on that day. But *then*—they gave the people a holiday from all sorts of work every second Tuesday. This was giving to the two Cæsars that which was *his* respective. Wise, beautiful, thoughtful, generous legislators! Would Wilberforce give us our Tuesdays? No: (d—n him!)—he would turn the six days into sevenths,

“And those three smiling seasons of the year  
Into a Russian Winter.”—OLD PLAY.

I am sitting opposite a person who is making strange distortions with the gout, which is not



## TO BARTON

unpleasant—to me at least. What is the reason we do not sympathise with pain, short of some terrible surgical operation! Hazlitt, who boldly says all he feels, avows that not only he does not pity sick people, but he hates them. I obscurely recognise his meaning. Pain is probably too selfish a consideration, too simply a consideration of self-attention. We pity poverty, loss of friends, etc.—more complex things, in which the sufferer's feelings are associated with others. This is a rough thought suggested by the presence of gout; I want head to extricate it and plane it. What is all this to your letter? I felt it to be a good one, but my turn, when I write at all, is perversely to travel out of the record, so that my letters are anything but answers. So you still want a motto! You must not take my ironical one, because your book, I take it, is too serious for it. Bickerstaff might have used it for *his* lucubrations. What do you think of (for a title) *Religio Tremuli?* or *Tremebundi?* There is *Religio-Medici* and *Laici*. But perhaps the volume is not quite Quakerish enough, or exclusively so, for it. Your own “Vigils” is perhaps the best. While I have space, let me congratulate with you the return of Spring: what a summery Spring too! all those qualms about the dog and cray-fish melt before it. I am going to be happy and *vain* again.

A hasty farewell,

C. LAMB.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

LETTER CCLXIV.]

May 15, 1824.

Dear B. B.—I am oppressed with business all day, and Company all night. But I will snatch a quarter of an hour. Your recent acquisitions of the Picture and the Letter are greatly to be congratulated. I too have a picture of my father and the copy of his first love verses; but they have been mine long. Blake is a real name, I assure you, and a most extraordinary man, if he be still living. He is the Robert Blake, whose wild designs accompany a splendid folio edition of the “Night Thoughts,” which you may have seen, in one of which he pictures the parting of soul and body by a solid mass of human form floating off, God knows how, from a lumpish mass (*fac Simile* to itself) left behind on the dying bed. He paints in water colours marvellous strange pictures, visions of his brain, which he asserts that he has seen. They have great merit. He has *seen* the old Welsh bards on Snowdon—he has seen the Beautifullest, the strongest, and the Ugliest Man, left alone from the Massacre of the Britons by the Romans, and has painted them from memory (I have seen his paintings), and asserts them to be as good as the figures of Raphael and Angelo, but not better, as they had precisely the same retro-visions and prophetic visions with themselves [himself]. The painters in oil (which he will have it that neither of them practised) he affirms to have

## TO BARTON

been the ruin of art, and affirms that all the while he was engaged in his Water paintings, Titian was disturbing him, Titian the Ill Genius of Oil Painting. His Pictures—one in particular, the Canterbury Pilgrims (far above Stothard's)—have great merit, but hard, dry, yet with grace. He has written a Catalogue of them with a most spirited criticism on Chaucer, but mystical and full of Vision. His poems have been sold hitherto only in Manuscript. I never read them; but a friend at my desire procured the "Sweep Song." There is one to a tiger, which I have heard recited, beginning—

"Tiger, Tiger, burning bright,  
Thro' the desarts of the night,"

which is glorious, but, alas! I have not the book; for the man is flown, whither I know not—to Hades or a Mad House. But I must look on him as one of the most extraordinary persons of the age. Montgomery's book I have not much hope from. The Society, with the affected name, has been labouring at it for these 20 years, and made few converts. I think it was injudicious to mix stories avowedly colour'd by fiction with the sad true statements from the parliamentary records, etc., but I wish the little Negroes all the good that can come from it. I batter'd my brains (not butter'd them—but it is a bad *a*) for a few verses for them, but I could make nothing of it. You have been luckier.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

But Blake's are the flower of the set, you will, I am sure, agree, tho' some of Montgomery's at the end are pretty ; but the Dream awkwardly paraphras'd from B.

With the exception of an Epilogue for a Private Theatrical, I have written nothing now for near 6 months. It is in vain to spur me on. I must wait. I cannot write without a genial impulse, and I have none. 'Tis barren all and dearth. No matter ; life is something without scribbling. I have got rid of my bad spirits, and hold up pretty well this rain-damn'd May.

So we have lost another Poet. I never much relished his Lordship's mind, and shall be sorry if the Greeks have cause to miss him. He was to me offensive, and I never can make out his great *power*, which his admirers talk of. Why, a line of Wordsworth's is a lever to lift the immortal spirit ! Byron can only move the Spleen. He was at best a Satyrst,—in any other way, he was mean enough. I daresay I do him injustice ; but I cannot love him, nor squeeze a tear to his memory. He did not like the world, and he has left it, as Alderman Curtis advised the Radicals, "If they don't like their Country, damn 'em, let 'em leave it," they possessing no rood of ground in England, and he 10,000 acres. Byron was better than many Curtises.

Farewell, and accept this apology for a

## TO BARTON

letter from one who owes you so much in that kind.

Yours ever truly,

C. L.

B. Barton, Esq., Woodbridge, Suffolk.

LETTER CCLXV.]

July 7, 1824.

Dear B. B.—I have been suffering under a severe inflammation of the eyes, notwithstanding which I resolutely went through your very pretty volume at once, which I dare pronounce in no ways inferior to former lucubrations. “*Abroad*” and “*lord*” are vile rhymes notwithstanding, and if you count you will wonder how many times you have repeated the word *unearthly*; thrice in one poem. It is become a slang word with the bards; avoid it in future lustily. “*Time*” is fine; but there are better a good deal, I think. The volume does not lie by me; and after a long day’s smarting fatigue, which has almost put out my eyes (not blind however to your merits), I dare not trust myself with long writing. The verses to Bloomfield are the sweetest in the collection. Religion is sometimes lugged in, as if it did not come naturally. I will go over carefully when I get my seeing, and exemplify. You have also too much of singing metre, such as requires no deep ear to make; lilting measure, in which you have done Woolman injustice. Strike at less superficial melodies. The piece on Nayler is more to my fancy.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

My eye runs waters. But I will give you a fuller account some day. The book is a very pretty one in more than one sense. The decorative harp, perhaps, too ostentatious ; a simple pipe preferable.

Farewell, and many thanks. C. LAMB.

TO JOHN B. DIBDIN

LETTER CCLXVI.]

July 28, 1824.

My dear Sir—I must appear negligent in not having thanked you for the very pleasant books you sent me. *Arthur*, and the *Novel*, we have both of us read with unmixed satisfaction. They are full of quaint conceits, and running over with good-humour and good-nature. I naturally take little interest in story, but in these the manner and not the end is the interest ; it is such pleasant travelling one scarce cares whither it leads us. Pray express our pleasure to your father with my best thanks.

I am involved in a routine of visiting among the family of Barron Field, just returned from Botany Bay. I shall hardly have an open evening before *Tuesday* next. Will you come to us then ?

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

## TO CARY—BARTON

TO THE REV. H. F. CARY

LETTER CCLXVII.]

*East India House,  
August 19, 1824.*

Dear Sir—I shall have much pleasure in dining with you on Wednesday next, with much shame that I have not noticed your kind present of the *Birds*, which I found very chirping and whimsical. I believe at the time I was daily thinking of paying you a visit, and put it off—till I should come. Somehow it slipt, and I must crave your pardon.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

## TO BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCLXVIII.]

*August 1824.*

Dear B. B.—I congratulate you on getting a house over your head. I find the comfort of it I am sure. At my town lodgings the mistress was always quarrelling with our maid, and at my place of rustication the whole family were always beating one another, brothers beating sisters (one, a most beautiful girl, lamed for life), father beating sons and daughters, and son again beating his father, knocking him fairly down, a scene I never before witnessed, but was called out of bed by the unnatural blows, the parricidal

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

colour of which, though my morals could not but condemn, yet my reason did heartily approve, and in the issue the house was quieter for a day or so than I had ever known. I am now all harmony and quiet, even to the sometimes wishing back again some of the old rufflings. There is something stirring in these civil broils.

The album shall be attended to. If I can light upon a few appropriate rhymes (but rhymes come with difficulty from me now) I shall beg a place in the neat margin of your young house-keeper.

The "Prometheus," *unbound*, is a capital story. The literal rogue! What if you had ordered "Elfrida" in *sheets*! she'd have been sent up I warrant you. Or bid him clasp his Bible (*i.e.* to his bosom), he'd have clapt on a brass clasp, no doubt.

I can no more understand Shelley than you can. His poetry is "thin sown with profit or delight." Yet I must point to your notice a sonnet conceived and expressed with a witty delicacy. It is that addressed to one who hated him, but who could not persuade him to hate *him* again. His coyness to the other's passion—for hate demands a return as much as love, and starves without it—is most arch and pleasant. Pray, like it very much. For his theories and nostrums, they are oracular enough; but I either comprehend 'em not, or there is "miching malice" and mischief in 'em, but, for the most



## TO BARTON

part, ringing with their own emptiness. Hazlitt said well of 'em—"Many are the wiser and better for reading Shakspeare, but nobody was ever wiser or better for reading Shelley." I wonder you will sow your correspondence on so barren a ground as I am, that make such poor returns. But my head aches at the bare thought of letter-writing. I wish all the ink in the ocean dried up, and would listen to the quills shivering up in the candle flame, like parching martyrs. The same indisposition to write has stopped my "Elias"; but you will see a futile effort in the next Number, "wrung from me with slow pain." The fact is, my head is seldom cool enough. I am dreadfully indolent. To have to do anything—to order me a new coat, for instance, though my old buttons are shelled like beans—is an effort. My pen stammers like my tongue. What cool craniums those old inditers of folios must have had!—what a mortified pulse! Well; once more I throw myself on your mercy. Wishing peace in thy new dwelling,

C. LAMB.

LETTER CCLXIX.]

September 30, 1824.

Little book, surnamed of *white*,  
Clean as yet, and fair to sight,  
Keep thy attribution right.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

Never disproportion'd scrawl,  
Ugly blot (that's worse than all),  
On thy maiden clearness fall !

In each letter here design'd,  
Let the reader emblem'd find  
Neatness of the owner's mind.

Gilded margins count a sin ;  
Let thy leaves attraction win  
By the golden rules within ;

Sayings fetch'd from sages old ;  
Laws which Holy Writ unfold,  
Worthy to be grav'd in gold :

Lighter fancies not excluding ;  
Blameless wit, with nothing rude in,  
Sometimes mildly interluding

Amid strains of graver measure :  
Virtue's self hath oft her pleasure  
In sweet Muses' groves of leisure.

Riddles dark, perplexing sense ;  
Darker meanings of offence ;  
What but *shades*—be banish'd hence !

## TO BARTON

Whitest thoughts, in whitest dress,  
Candid meanings, best express  
Mind of quiet Quakeress.

Dear B. B.—“I am ill at these numbers”; but if the above be not too mean to have a place in thy daughter’s sanctum, take them with pleasure. I assume that her name is Hannah, because it is a pretty scriptural cognomen.

I began on another sheet of paper, and just as I had penned the second line of stanza two, an ugly blot fell, to illustrate my counsel. I am sadly given to blot, and modern blotting-paper gives no redress; it only smears, and makes it worse. The only remedy is scratching out, which gives it a clerkish look. The most innocent blots are made with red ink, and are rather ornamental. Marry, they are not always to be distinguished from the effusions of a cut finger. Well, I hope and trust thy tick-doleru, or however you spell it, is vanished, for I have frightful impressions of that tick, and do altogether hate it, as an unpaid score, or the tick of a death-watch. I take it to be a species of Vitus’s dance. (I omit the sanctity, writing to “one of the men called friends.”) I knew a young lady who could dance no other; she danced it through life, and very queer and fantastic were her steps.

Heaven bless thee from such measures, and keep thee from the foul fiend, who delights

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

to lead after false fires in the night, Flibbertigibbet, that gives the web and the pin, and I forget what else.

From my den, as Bunyan has it, 30th Sep.  
1824. C. L.

### TO MRS. COLLIER

LETTER CCLXX.]

*November 2, 1824.*

Dear Mrs. Collier—We receive so much pig from your kindness, that I really have not phrase enough to vary successive acknowledgments.

I think I shall get a printed form to serve on all occasions.

To say it was young, crisp, short, luscious, dainty-toed, is but to say what all its predecessors have been. It was eaten on Sunday and Monday, and doubts only exist as to which temperature it eat best, hot or cold. I incline to the latter. The Petty-feet made a pretty surprising prægustation for supper on Saturday night, just as I was loathingly in expectation of brenchese. I spell as I speak.

I do not know what news to send you. You will have heard of Alsager's death, and your son John's success in the Lottery. I say he is a wise man if he leaves off while he is well. The weather is wet to weariness; but Mary goes puddling about a-shopping after a gown

## TO PROCTER

for the winter. She wants it good and cheap. Now I hold that no good things are cheap, pig-presents always excepted. In this mournful weather I sit moping, where I now write, in an office dark as Erebus, jammed in between four walls, and writing by Candle-Light, most melancholy. Never see the light of the sun six hours in the day ; and am surprised to find how pretty it shines on Sundays. I wish I were a Caravan driver, or a Penny postman, to earn my bread in air and sunshine. Such a pedestrian as I am, to be tied by the legs, like a Fauntleroy, without the pleasure of his Exactions ! I am interrupted here with an official question which will take me up till it's time to go to dinner. So with repeated thanks and both our kindest remembrances to Mr. Collier and yourself, I conclude in haste,

Yours and his sincerely, C. LAMB.

On further inquiry Alsager is not dead ; but Mrs. A. is bro<sup>t</sup> to bed.

From my Den in Leadenhall.

## TO B. W. PROCTER

LETTER CCLXXI.] *Leadenhall, November 11, '24.*

My dear Procter—I do agnise a shame in not having been to pay my congratulations to Mrs.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

Procter and your happy self, but on Sunday (my only morning) I was engaged to a country walk ; and in virtue of the hypostatical union between us, when Mary calls, it is understood that I call too, we being univocal.

But indeed I am ill at these ceremonious inductions. I fancy I was not born with a call on my head, though I have brought one down upon it with a vengeance. I love not to pluck that sort of fruit crude, but to stay its ripening into visits. In probability Mary will be at Southampton Row this morning, and something of that kind be matured between you, but in any case not many hours shall elapse before I shake you by the hand.

Meantime give my kindest felicitations to Mrs. Procter, and assure her I look forward with the greatest delight to our acquaintance. By the way, the deuce a bit of cake has come to hand, which hath an inauspicious look at first, but I comfort myself that that Mysterious Service hath the property of Sacramental Bread, which mice cannot nibble, nor time moulder.

I am married myself to a severe step-wife, who keeps me, not at bed and board, but at desk and board, and is jealous of my morning aberrations. I cannot slip out to congratulate kinder unions. It is well she leaves me alone o' nights,—the d——d Day-hag *Business*. She is even now peeping over me to see I am writing

## TO MISS HUTCHINSON

no love letters. I come, my dear—Where is the Indigo Sale Book?

Twenty adieus, my dear friends, till we meet.  
Yours most truly, C. LAMB.

## TO MISS HUTCHINSON

LETTER CCLXXII.]

*Desk, November 11, 1824.*

My dear Miss Hutchinson—Mary bids me thank you for your kind letter. We are a little puzzled about your whereabouts. Miss Wordsworth writes Torkay, and you have queerly made it Torquay. Now Tokay we have heard of, and Torbay, which we take to be the true *male* spelling of the place; but somewhere we fancy it to be on “Devon’s leafy shores,” where we heartily wish the kindly breezes may restore all that is invalid among you. Robinson is returned, and speaks much of you all. We shall be most glad to hear good news from you from time to time. The best is, Procter is at last married. We have made sundry attempts to see the bride, but have accidentally failed, she being gone out a-gadding. We had promised our dear friends the Monkhouses—promised ourselves rather—a visit to them at Ramsgate; but I thought it best, and Mary seemed to have it at heart too, not to go far from home these last holydays. It is connected

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

with a sense of unsettlement, and secretly I know she hoped that such abstinence would be friendly to her health. She certainly has escaped her sad yearly visitation, whether in consequence of it, or of faith in it, and we have to be thankful for a good 1824. To get such a notion into our heads may go a great way another year. Not that we quite confined ourselves; but assuming Islington to be headquarters, we made timid flights to Ware, Watford, etc., to try how the trouts tasted, for a night out or so, not long enough to make the sense of change oppressive, but sufficient to scour the rust of home. Coleridge is not returned from the sea. As a little scandal may divert you recluses, we were in the Summer dining at a clergyman of Southey's "Church of England," at Hertford, the same who officiated to Thurtell's last moments, and indeed an old contemporary Blue of C.'s and mine at school. After dinner we talked of C.; and F., who is a mighty good fellow in the main, but hath his cassock prejudices, inveighed against the moral character of C. I endeavoured to enlighten him on the subject, till having driven him out of some of his holds, he stopped my mouth at once by appealing to me whether it was not very well known that C. "at that very moment was living in a state of open adultery with Mrs. \* \* \* \* \* at Highgate?" Nothing I could say, serious or bantering, after that, could remove the deep



## TO BARTON

inrooted conviction of the whole company assembled that such was the case ! Of course you will keep this quite close, for I would not involve my poor blundering friend, who I daresay believed it all thoroughly. My interference of course was imputed to the goodness of my heart, that could imagine nothing wrong, etc. Such it is if ladies will go gadding about with other people's husbands at watering-places. How careful we should be to avoid the appearance of evil !

I thought this anecdote might amuse you. It is not worth resenting seriously ; only I give it as a specimen of orthodox candour. O Southey, Southey, how long would it be before you would find one of us Unitarians propagating such unwarrantable scandal ! Providence keep you all from the foul fiend, scandal, and send you back well and happy to dear Gloster Place !

C. L.

Miss Hutchinson,  
T. Monkhouse, Esq.,  
Strand, Torkay, Torbay, Devon.

## TO BERNARD BARTON

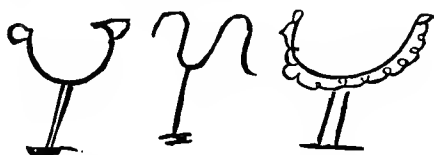
LETTER CCLXXIII.]

*December 1, 1824.*

Dear B. B.—If Mr. Mitford will send me a full and circumstantial description of his desired vases, I will transmit the same to a gentleman

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

resident at Canton, whom I think I have interest enough in to take the proper care for their execution. But Mr. M. must have patience. China is a great way off, further perhaps than he thinks ; and his next year's roses must be content to wither in a Wedgwood pot. He will please to say whether he should like his Arms upon them, etc. I send herewith some patterns which suggest themselves to me at the first blush of the subject, but he will probably consult his own taste after all.



The last pattern is obviously fitted for ranunculuses only. The two former may indifferently hold daisies, marjoram, sweet-williams, and that sort. My friend in Canton is Inspector of Teas ; his name is Ball ; and I can think of no better tunnel. I shall expect Mr. M.'s decision.

Taylor and Hessey finding their magazine goes off very heavily at 2s. 6d. are prudently going to raise their price another shilling ; and having already more authors than they want, intend to increase the number of them. If they set up against the *New Monthly* they must change their present hands. It is not tying the dead

## TO BARTON

carcase of a Review to a half-dead Magazine will do their business. It is like George Dyer multiplying his volumes to make 'em sell better. When he finds one will not go off, he publishes two ; two stick, he tries three ; three hang fire, he is confident that four will have a better chance.

And now, my dear sir, trifling apart, the gloomy catastrophe of yesterday morning prompts a sadder vein. The fate of the unfortunate Fauntleroy makes me, whether I will or no, to cast reflecting eyes around on such of my friends as, by a parity of situation, are exposed to a similarity of temptation. . My very style seems to myself to become more impressive than usual, with the change of theme. Who that standeth, knoweth but he may yet fall ? Your hands as yet, I am most willing to believe, have never deviated into other's property. You think it impossible that you could ever commit so heinous an offence ; but so thought Fauntleroy once ; so have thought many besides him, who at last have expiated as he hath done. You are as yet upright ; but you are a banker, at least the next thing to it. I feel the delicacy of the subject ; but cash must pass through your hands, sometimes to a great amount. If in an unguarded hour—but I will hope better. Consider the scandal it will bring upon those of your persuasion. Thousands would go to see a Quaker hanged, that would be indifferent to the fate of a Presbyterian or an Anabaptist. Think of

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

the effect it would have on the sale of your poems alone, not to mention higher considerations ! I tremble, I am sure, at myself, when I think that so many poor victims of the law, at one time of their life, made as sure of never being hanged, as I in my presumption am too ready to do myself. What are we better than they ? Do we come into the world with different necks ? Is there any distinctive mark under our left ears ? Are we unstrangulable, I ask you ? Think of these things. I am shocked sometimes at the shape of my own fingers, not for their resemblance to the ape tribe (which is something), but for the exquisite adaptation of them to the purposes of picking, fingering, etc. No one that is so framed, I maintain it, but should tremble.

C. L.

## TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

LETTER CCLXXIV.]

1824.

Dear Coleridge—Why will you make your visits, which should give pleasure, matter of regret to your friends ? You never come but you take away some folio, that is part of my existence. With a great deal of difficulty I was made to comprehend the extent of my loss. My maid, Becky, brought me a dirty bit of paper, which contained her description of some

## TO COLERIDGE

book which Mr. Coleridge had taken away. It was "Luster's Tables," which, for some time, I could not make out. "What ! has he carried away any of the *tables*, Becky ?" "No, it wasn't any tables, but it was a book that he called Luster's Tables." I was obliged to search personally among my shelves, and a huge fissure suddenly disclosed to me the true nature of the damage I had sustained. That book, Coleridge, you should not have taken away, for it is not mine ; it is the property of a friend, who does not know its value, nor indeed have I been very sedulous in explaining to him the estimate of it ; but was rather contented in giving a sort of corroboration to a hint that he let fall, as to its being suspected to be not genuine, so that in all probability it would have fallen to me as a deodand ; not but I am as sure it is Luther's as I am sure that Jack Bunyan wrote the *Pilgrim's Progress* ; but it was not for me to pronounce upon the validity of testimony that had been disputed by learned clerks than I ; so I quietly let it occupy the place it had usurped upon my shelves, and should never have thought of issuing an ejectment against it ; for why should I be so bigoted as to allow rites of hospitality to none but my own books, children, etc. ?—a species of egotism I abhor from my heart. No ; let 'em all snug together, Hebrews and Proselytes of the gate ; no selfish partiality of mine shall make distinction between them. I charge no warehouse room for

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

my friends' commodities ; they are welcome to come and stay as long as they like, without paying rent. I have several such strangers that I treat with more than Arabian courtesy. There's a copy of More's fine poem, which is none of mine, but I cherish it as my own. I am none of those churlish landlords that advertise the goods to be taken away in ten days' time, or then to be sold to pay expenses. So you see I had no right to lend you that book. I may lend you my own books, because it is at my own hazard ; but it is not honest to hazard a friend's property ; I always make that distinction. I hope you will bring it with you, or send it by Hartley ; or he can bring that, and you the *Polemical Discourses*, and come and eat some atoning mutton with us one of these days shortly. We are engaged two or three Sundays deep, but always dine at home on week-days at half-past four. So come all four—men and books I mean. My third shelf (northern compartment) from the top has two devilish gaps, where you have knocked out its two eye-teeth.

Your wronged friend,

C. LAMB.

## To LEIGH HUNT

LETTER CCLXXV.]

[End of 1824.]

ILLUSTREZZIMO SIGNOR—I have obeyed your mandate to a tittle. I accompany this with a

## TO HUNT

volume ; but what have you done with the first I sent you ? Have you swapped it with some lazzaroni for macaroni, or pledged it with a gondolier for a passage ? Peradventuri the Cardinal Gonsalvi took a fancy to it : his Eminence has done my Nearness an honour. 'Tis but a step to the Vatican. As you judge, my works do not enrich the workman ; but I get *vat I can* for 'em. They keep dragging me on, a poor, worn mill-horse, in the eternal round of the damned magazine ; but 'tis they are blind, not I. Colburn (where I recognise with delight the gay W. Honeycomb renovated) hath the ascendancy. I was with the Novellos last week. They have a large, cheap house and garden, with a dainty library (magnificent) without books ; but what will make you bless yourself (I am too old for wonder), something has touched the right organ in Vincentio at last. He attends a Wesleyan chapel on Kingsland Green. He at first tried to laugh it off ; he only went for the singing ; but the cloven foot—I retract—the lamb's trotters are at length apparent. Mary Isabella attributes it to a lightness induced by his headaches ; but I think I see in it a less accidental influence. Mr. Clark is at perfect staggers ! the whole fabric of his infidelity is shaken. He has no one to join him in his horse-insults and indecent obstreperousnesses against Christianity ; for Holmes (the bonny Holmes) is gone to Salisbury to be organist, and Isabella

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

and the Clark make but a feeble quorum. The children have all neat little clasped pray-books ; and I have laid out seven shillings and eightpence in Watts's Hymns for Christmas presents for them. The eldest girl alone holds out. She has been at Boulogne, skirting upon the vast focus of Atheism, and imported bad principles in patois French. But the strongholds are crumbling. N. appears as yet to have but a confused notion of the Atonement. It makes him giddy, he says, to think much about it ; but such giddiness is spiritual sobriety. Well, Byron is gone ; and — is now the best poet in England. Fill up the gap to your fancy. Barry Cornwall has at last carried the pretty A[nne] S[kepper]. They are just in the treacle-moon. Hope it won't clog his wings (gaum, we used to say at school). Mary, my sister, has worn me out with eight weeks' cold and toothache, her average complement in the Winter ; and it will not go away. She is otherwise well, and reads novels all day long. She has had an exempt year, a good year ; for which, forgetting the minor calamity, she and I are most thankful. Alsager is in a flourishing house, with wife and children about him, in Mecklenburg Square,—almost too fine to visit. Barron Field is come home from Sydney ; but as yet I can hear no tidings of a pension. He is plump and friendly ; his wife, really a very superior woman. He resumes the bar. I have got acquainted with Mr. Irving,



## TO ALLSOP

the Scotch preacher, whose fame must have reached you. He is an humble disciple at the foot of Gamaliel S. T. C. Judge how his own sectarists must stare, when I tell you he has dedicated a book to S. T. C., acknowledging to have learnt more of the nature of faith, Christianity, and Christian Church, from him than from all the men he ever conversed with ! He is a most amiable, sincere, modest man in a room, this Boanerges in the temple. Mrs. Montague told him the dedication would do him no good. "That shall be a reason for doing it," was his answer. Judge, now, whether this man be a quack. Dear H., take this imperfect notelet for a letter : it looks so much the more like conversing on nearer terms. Love to all the Hunts, old friend Thornton, and all.

Yours ever,

C. LAMB.

## TO THOMAS ALLSOP

LETTER CCLXXVI.]

*Colebrook Cottage, Islington,  
January 7, 1825.*

Dear Allsop—I acknowledge with thanks the receipt of a draft on Messrs. Wms. for £81 : 11 : 3 which I haste to cash in the present alarming state of the money market. Hurst and Robinson gone. I have imagined a Chorus of ill-used Authors singing on the Occasion :

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

What should we when Booksellers break ?  
We should rejoice.

*Da capo.*

We regret exceedingly Mrs. Allsop's being unwell. Mary or both will come and see her soon. The frost is cruel, and we have both colds. I take Pills again, which battle with your Wine ; and Victory hovers doubtful. By the by, tho' not disinclined to presents, I remember our bargain to take a dozen at sale price, and must demur.

With once again thanks and best loves to Mrs. A.

Turn over—Yours,

C. LAMB.

TO JOHN B. DIBDIN

LETTER CCLXXVII.] *E. I. H., January 11, 1825.*

My dear Sir—Pray return my best thanks to your father for his little volume. It is like all of his I have seen—spirited, good-humoured, and redolent of the wit and humour of a century ago. He should have lived with Gay and his set. The *Chessiad* is so clever that I relished it in spite of my total ignorance of the game. I have it not before me, but I remember a capital simile of the Charwoman letting in her Watchman husband, which is better than Butler's Lobster turned to Red. Hazard is a grand

## TO MISS HUTCHINSON

character—Jove in his Chair. When you are disposed to leave your one room for my six, Colebrooke is where it was ; and my sister begs me to add that as she is disappointed of meeting your sister *your way*, we shall be most happy to see her *our way*, when you have an evening to spare. Do not stand on ceremonies and introductions, but come at once. I need not say that if you can induce your father to join the party it will be so much the pleasanter. Can you name an evening *next week* ? I give you long credit.

Meantime am, as usual, yours truly,

C. L.

When I saw the *Chessiad* advertised by C. D. the younger, I hoped it might be yours. What title is left for you ?

Charles Dibdin the younger, *junior*.

O no, you are Timothy !

## TO MISS HUTCHINSON

LETTER CCLXXVIII.]

The brevity of this is owing to scratching it off at my desk amid expected interruptions. By habit, I can write letters only at office.

*January 20, 1825.*

Dear Miss H.—Thank you for a noble goose, which wanted only the massive incrustation that

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

we used to pick-axe open, about this season, in Old Gloucester Place. When shall we eat another goose pie together? The pheasant, too, must not be forgotten; twice as big, and half as good as a Partridge. You ask about the editor of the *London*; I know of none. This first specimen is flat and pert enough to justify subscribers who grudge t'other shilling. De Quincey's "Parody" was submitted to him before printed, and had his *Probatum*. The "Horns" is in a poor taste, resembling the most laboured papers in the *Spectator*. I had signed it "Jack Horner"; but Taylor and Hessey said it would be thought an offensive article unless I put my known signature to it, and wrung from me my slow consent. But did you read the "Memoir of Liston"?—and did you guess whose it was? Of all the lies I ever put off, I value this most. It is from top to toe, every paragraph, Pure Invention, and has passed for gospel; has been republished in newspapers, and in the penny play-bills of the night, as an authentic account. I shall certainly go to the naughty man some day for my fibbings. In the next Number I figure as a Theologian! and have attacked my late brethren, the Unitarians. What Jack-Pudding tricks I shall play next, I know not; I am almost at the end of my tether. Coleridge is quite blooming, but his book has not budded yet. I hope I have spelt Torquay right now, and that this will find you all mending,

## TO NOVELLO

and looking forward to a London flight with the Spring. Winter, *we* have had none, but plenty of foul weather. I have lately picked up an epigram which pleased me—

“Two noble earls, whom if I quote,  
Some folks might call me sinner,  
The one invented half a coat,  
The other half a dinner.

The plan was good, as some will say;  
And fitted to console one;  
Because, in this poor starving day,  
Few can afford a whole one.”

I have made the lame one still lamer by imperfect memory; but spite of bald diction, a little done to it might improve it into a good one. You have nothing else to do at Torquay. Suppose you try it. Well, God bless you all, as wishes Mary most sincerely, with many thanks for letter, etc. ELIA.

## TO VINCENT NOVELLO

LETTER CCLXXIX.]

*Colebrook, Tuesday,  
Jan. 25, 1825.*

Dear Novello—My sister's cold is as obstinate as an old Handelian, whom a modern amateur is trying to convert to Mozart-ism. As company must, and always does, injure it, Emma and I

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

propose to come to you in the evening of to-morrow, *instead of meeting here*. An early bread-and-cheese supper at half-past eight will oblige us. Loves to the bearer of many children.

C. LAMB.

I sign with a black seal, that you may [begin] to think her cold has killed Mary ; which will be an agreeable unsurprise when you read the note.

V. Novello, Esq., Green, Shacklewell.

### TO BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCLXXX.]

February 10, 1825.

Dear B. B.—I am vexed that ugly paper should have offended. I kept it as clear from objectionable phrases as possible, and it was Hessey's fault, and my weakness, that it did not appear anonymous. No more of it, for God's sake. The "Spirit of the Age" is by Hazlitt. The characters of Coleridge, etc., he had done better in former publications, the praise and the abuse much stronger, etc. ; but the new ones are capitally done. Horne Tooke is a matchless portrait. My advice is, to borrow it rather than buy it. I have it. He has laid too many colours on my likeness ; but I have had so much injustice done me in my own name, that I make

## TO BARTON

a rule of accepting as much over-measure to Elia as gentlemen think proper to bestow. Lay it on and spare not. Your gentleman brother sets my mouth a-watering after liberty. Oh that I were kicked out of Leadenhall with every mark of indignity, and a competence in my fob ! The birds of the air would not be so free as I should. How I would prance and curvet it, and pick up cowslips, and ramble about purposeless, as an idiot ! The Author-mometer is a good fancy. I have caused great speculation in the dramatic (not *thy*) world by a lying "Life of Liston," all pure invention. The town has swallowed it, and it is copied into newspapers, play-bills, etc., as authentic. You do not know the Droll, and possibly missed reading the article (in our first Number, new series). A life more improbable for him to have lived would not be easily invented. But your rebuke, coupled with "Dream on J. Bunyan," checks me. I'd rather do more in my favourite way, but feel dry. I must laugh sometimes. I am poor Hypochondriacus, and *not* Liston. The second Number is all trash. What are T. and H. about ? Why did poor Scott die ? There was comfort in writing with such associates as were his little band of scribblers ; some gone away, some affronted away, and I am left as the solitary widow looking for water-cresses. The only clever hand they have is Darley, who has written on the Dramatists under the name of

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

John Lacy. But his function seems suspended.

I have been harassed more than usually at office, which has stopt my correspondence lately. I write with a confused aching head, and you must accept this apology for a letter.

I will do something soon, if I can, as a peace-offering to the queen of the East Angles—something she shan't scold about. For the present farewell.

Thine,

C. L.

I am fifty years old this day. Drink my health.

### TO THOMAS MANNING

LETTER CCLXXXI.]

[Early in 1825.]

My dear M.—You might have come inopportunately a week since, when we had an inmate. At present and for as long as *ever* you like, our castle is at your service. I saw T[uthill] yesternight, who has done for me what may

“To all my nights and days to come,  
Give solely sovran sway and masterdom.”

But I dare not hope, for fear of disappointment. I cannot be more explicit at present. But I have it under his own hand, that I am *non-*



## TO BARTON

capacitated (I cannot write it *in-*) for business.  
O joyous imbecility ! Not a susurrantion of this  
to *anybody* !

Mary's love.

C. LAMB.

## TO BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCLXXXII.]

March 23, 1825.

Dear B. B.—I have had no impulse to write, or attend to any single object but myself for weeks past—my single self, I—by myself—I. I am sick of hope deferred. The grand wheel is in agitation, that is to turn up my Fortune ; but round it rolls, and will turn up nothing. I have a glimpse of freedom, of becoming a Gentleman at large ; but I am put off from day to day. I have offered my resignation, and it is neither accepted nor rejected. Eight weeks am I kept in this fearful suspense. Guess what an absorbing stake I feel it. I am not conscious of the existence of friends present or absent. The East India Directors alone can be that thing to me or not. I have just learned that nothing will be decided this week. Why the next ? Why any week ? It has fretted me into an itch of the fingers ; I rub 'em against paper, and write to you, rather than not allay this scorbuta.

While I can write, let me abjure you to have no doubts of IRVING. Let Mr. Mitford drop

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

his disrespect. Irving has prefixed a dedication (of a missionary subject, first part) to Coleridge, the most beautiful, cordial, and sincere. He there acknowledges his obligation to S. T. C. for his knowledge of Gospel truths, the nature of a Christian Church, etc., to the talk of Samuel Taylor Coleridge (at whose Gamaliel feet he sits weekly), rather than to that of all the men living. This from him, the great dandled and petted sectarian—to a religious character so equivocal in the world's eye as that of S. T. C., so foreign to the Kirk's estimate—can this man be a quack? The language is as affecting as the spirit of the dedication. Some friend told him, "This dedication will do you no good," *i.e.* not in the world's repute, or with your own people. "That is a reason for doing it," quoth Irving.

I am thoroughly pleased with him. He is firm, out-speaking, intrepid, and docile as a pupil of Pythagoras. You must like him.

Yours, in tremors of painful hope,

C. LAMB.

## TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

LETTER CCLXXXIII.] *Colebrook Cottage, April 6, 1825.*

Dear Wordsworth—I have been several times meditating a letter to you concerning the good thing which has befallen me, but the thought

## TO WORDSWORTH

of poor Monkhouse came across me. He was one that I had exulted in the prospect of congratulating me. He and you were to have been the first participators, for indeed it has been ten weeks since the first motion of it. Here am I then, after thirty-three years' slavery, sitting in my own room at eleven o'clock this finest of all April mornings, a freed man, with £441 a year for the remainder of my life, live I as long as John Dennis, who outlived his annuity and starved at ninety; £441, *i.e.* £450, with a deduction of £9 for a provision secured to my sister, she being survivor, the pension guaranteed by Act Georgii Tertii, etc.

I came home FOR EVER on Tuesday in last week. The incomprehensibleness of my condition overwhelmed me. It was like passing from life into eternity. Every year to be as long as three, *i.e.* to have three times as much real time (time that is my own) in it! I wandered about thinking I was happy, but feeling I was not. But that tumultuousness is passing off, and I begin to understand the nature of the gift. Holydays, even the annual month, were always uneasy joys; their conscious fugitiveness; the craving after making the most of them. Now, when all is holyday, there are no holydays. I can sit at home, in rain or shine, without a restless impulse for walkings. I am daily steadying, and shall soon find it as natural to me to be my own master, as it has been irksome to

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

have had a master. Mary wakes every morning with an obscure feeling that some good has happened to us.

Leigh Hunt and Montgomery, after their releasements, describe the shock of their emancipation much as I feel mine. But it hurt their frames. I eat, drink, and sleep as sound as ever. I lay no anxious schemes for going hither and thither, but take things as they occur. Yesterday I excursed twenty miles ; to-day I write a few letters. Pleasuring was for fugitive play-days ; mine are fugitive only in the sense that life is fugitive. Freedom and life co-existent !

At the foot of such a call upon you for gratulation, I am ashamed to advert to that melancholy event. Monkhouse was a character I learned to love slowly, but it grew upon me, yearly, monthly, daily. What a chasm has it made in our pleasant parties ! His noble friendly face was always coming before me, till this hurrying event in my life came, and for the time has absorbed all interest ; in fact it has shaken me a little. My old desk companions, with whom I have had such merry hours, seem to reproach me for removing my lot from among them. They were pleasant creatures ; but to the anxieties of business, and a weight of possible worse ever impending, I was not equal. Tuthill and Gillman gave me my certificates. I laughed at the friendly lie implied in them ; but my sister shook her head, and said it was all

## TO WORDSWORTH

true. Indeed, this last Winter I was jaded out : Winters were always worse than other parts of the year, because the spirits are worse, and I had no daylight. In Summer I had daylight evenings. The relief was hinted to me from a superior Power, when I, poor slave, had not a hope but that I must wait another seven years with Jacob : and lo ! the Rachel which I coveted is brought to me !

Have you read the noble dedication of Irving's "Missionary Orations" to S. T. C. ? Who shall call this man a quack hereafter ? What the Kirk will think of it neither I nor Irving care. When somebody suggested to him that it would not be likely to do him good, videlicet, among his own people, "That is a reason for doing it," was his noble answer. That Irving thinks he has profited mainly by S. T. C., I have no doubt. The very style of the Dedication shows it.

Communicate my news to Southey, and beg his pardon for my being so long acknowledging his kind present of the "Church," which circumstances, having no reference to himself, prevented at the time. Assure him of my deep respect and friendliest feelings.

Divide the same, or rather each take the whole to you—I mean you and all yours. To Miss Hutchinson I must write separate.

Farewell ! and end at last, long selfish letter.

C. LAMB.

# LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

TO BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCLXXXIV.]

*April 6, 1825.*

Dear B. B.—My spirits are so tumultuary with the novelty of my recent emancipation, that I have scarce steadiness of hand, much more mind, to compose a letter. I am free, B. B.—free as air !

“The little bird that wings the sky  
Knows no such liberty.”

I was set free on Tuesday in last week at four o'clock. I came home for ever !

I have been describing my feelings as well as I can to Wordsworth in a long letter, and don't care to repeat. Take it briefly, that for a few days I was painfully oppressed by so mighty a change, but it is becoming daily more natural to me. I went and sat among 'em all at my old thirty-three years' desk yester morning ; and, deuce take me, if I had not yearnings at leaving all my old pen-and-ink fellows, merry, sociable lads, at leaving them in the lurch, fag, fag, fag ! —The comparison of my own superior felicity gave me anything but pleasure.

B. B., I would not serve another seven years for seven hundred thousand pounds ! I have got £441 net for life, sanctioned by Act of Parliament, with a provision for Mary if she survives me. I will live another fifty years ; or,

## TO MISS HUTCHINSON

if I live but ten, they will be thirty, reckoning the quantity of real time in them, *i.e.* the time that is a man's own. Tell me how you like "Barbara S." Will it be received in atonement for the foolish "Vision"?—I mean by the lady. *A-propos*, I never saw Mrs. Crawford in my life; nevertheless 'tis all true of somebody.

Address me, in future, Colebrook Cottage, Islington. I am really nervous (but that will wear off), so take this brief announcement.

Yours truly,

C. L.

## TO MISS HUTCHINSON

LETTER CCLXXXV.]

*April 18, 1825.*

Dear Miss Hutchinson—You want to know all about my gaol delivery. Take it then. About twelve weeks since I had a sort of intimation that a resignation might be well accepted from me. This was a kind bird's whisper. On that hint I spake. Gillman and Tuthill furnished me with certificates of wasted health and sore spirits—not much more than the truth, I promise you—and for nine weeks I was kept in a fright. I had gone too far to recede, and they might take advantage, and dismiss me with a much less sum than I had reckoned on. However, liberty came at last, with a liberal provision. I have given up what I could have lived on in the

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

country ; but have enough to live here, by management and scribbling occasionally. I would not go back to my prison for seven years longer for £10,000 a year ; seven years after one is fifty, is no trifle to give up. Still I am a young *pensioner*, and have served but thirty-three years ; very few, I assure you, retire before forty, forty-five, or fifty years' service.

You will ask how I bear my freedom ? Faith, for some days I was staggered ; could not comprehend the magnitude of my deliverance ; was confused, giddy ; knew not whether I was on my head or my heel, as they say. But those giddy feelings have gone away, and my weather-glass stands at a degree or two above

### CONTENT.

I go about quiet, and have none of that restless hunting after recreation which made holydays formerly uneasy joys. All being holydays, I feel as if I had none, as they do in heaven, where 'tis all red-letter days. I have a kind letter from the Wordsworths, *congratulatory* not a little. It is a damp, I do assure you, amid all my prospects, that I can receive *none* from a quarter upon which I had calculated, almost more than from any, upon receiving congratulations. I had grown to like poor Monkhouse more and more. I do not esteem a soul living or not living more warmly than I had grown to esteem and value him. But words are vain. We have none of us to count



## TO WORDSWORTH

upon many years. That is the only cure for sad thoughts. If only some died, and the rest were permanent on earth, what a thing a friend's death would be then !

I must take leave, having put off answering a load of letters to this morning ; and this, alas ! is the first. Our kindest remembrances to Mrs. Monkhouse,

And believe us yours most truly,

C. LAMB.

## TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

LETTER CCLXXXVI.]

[Middle of *May* 1825.]

Dear W.—I write post-haste to ensure a frank. Thanks for your hearty congratulations. I may now date from the sixth week of my “Hegira, or Flight from Leadenhall.” I have lived so much in it, that a Summer seems already past ; and ’tis but early May yet with you and other people. How I look down on the slaves and drudges of the world ! Its inhabitants are a vast cotton-web of spin-spinners ! O the carking cares ! O the money-grubbers ! Sempiternal muckworms !

Your Virgil I have lost sight of, but suspect it is in the hands of Sir G. Beaumont ; I think that circumstances made me shy of procuring it before. Will you write to him about it ?—and your commands shall be obeyed to a tittle.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

Coleridge has just finished his prize Essay by which, if it get the prize, he'll touch an additional £100 I fancy. His book, too ("Commentary on Bishop Leighton"), is quite finished, and *penes* Taylor and Hessey.

In the *London Magazine*, which is just out (1st of May), are two papers entitled the "Superannuated Man," which I wish you to see; and also, 1st of April, a little thing called "Barbara S——," a story gleaned from Miss Kelly. The *London Magazine*, if you can get it, will save my enlargement upon the topic of my manumission.

I must scribble to make up my *hiatus crumenæ*; for there are so many ways, pious and profligate, of getting rid of money in this vast city and suburbs, that I shall miss my THIRDS. But *couragio!* I despair not. Your kind hint of the cottage was well thrown out; an anchorage for *age* and school of economy, when necessity comes; but without this latter, I have an unconquerable terror of changing place. It does not agree with us. I say it from conviction; else I do sometimes ruralise in fancy.

Some d—d people are come in, and I must finish abruptly. By d—d, I only mean deuced. 'Tis these suitors of Penelope that makes it necessary to *authorise* a little for gin and mutton, and such trifles.

Excuse my abortive scribble.

Yours, not in more haste than heart,

C. L.

## TO BARTON

Love and recollects to all the Wms., Doras, Marys, round your Wrekin.

Mary is capitally well. Do write to Sir G. B., for I am shyish of applying to him.

## TO BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCLXXXVII.]

July 2, 1825.

My dear B. B.—My nervous attack has so unfitted me that I have not courage to sit down to a letter. My poor pittance in the *London* you will see is drawn from my sickness. Your book is very acceptable to me, because most of it is new to me; but your book itself we cannot thank you for more sincerely than for the introduction you favoured us with to Anne Knight. Now cannot I write *Mrs.* Anne Knight for the life of me. She is a very pleas——, but I won't write all we have said of her so often to ourselves, because I suspect you would read it to her. Only give my sister's and my kindest *remembrances* to her, and how glad we are we can say that word. If ever she come to Southwark again, I count upon another pleasant Bridge walk with her. Tell her, I got home, time for a rubber; but poor Tryphena will not understand that phrase of the worldling.

I am hardly able to appreciate your volume now: but I liked the dedication much, and the

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

apology for your bald burying grounds. To Shelley ; but *that* is not new. To the young Vesper-singer, Great Bealings, Playford, and what not.

If there be a cavil, it is that the topics of religious consolation, however beautiful, are repeated till a sort of triteness attends them. It seems as if you were for ever losing friends' children by death, and reminding their parents of the Resurrection. Do children die so often, and so good, in your parts? The topic taken from the consideration that they are snatched away from *possible vanities*, seems hardly sound ; for to an Omniscient eye their conditional failings must be one with their actual ; but I am too unwell for theology.

Such as I am,

I am yours and A[nne] K[night's] truly,  
C. LAMB.

## TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

LETTER CCLXXXVIII.]

*Islington, July 2, 1825.*

Dear C.—We are going off to Enfield, to Allsop's, for a day or two, with some intention of succeeding them in their lodging for a time, for this damned nervous fever (vide *London Magazine* for July) indisposes me for seeing any friends, and never any poor devil was so befriended

## TO COLERIDGE

as I am. Do you know any poor solitary human that wants that cordial to life, a true friend? I can spare him twenty: he shall have 'em good cheap. I have gallipots of 'em—genuine balm of cares—a going, a going, a going! Little plagues plague me a thousand times more than ever. I am like a disembodied soul in this, my eternity. I feel everything entirely, all in all, and all in, etc. This price I pay for liberty, but am richly content to pay it. The Odes are four-fifths done by Hood, a silentish young man you met at Islington one day, an invalid. The rest are Reynolds's, whose sister H. has recently married. I have not had a broken finger in them.

They are hearty, good-natured things, and I would put my name to 'em cheerfully, if I could as honestly. I complimented 'em in a newspaper, with an abatement for those puns you laud so. They are generally an excess. A Pun is a thing of too much consequence to be thrown in as a make-weight. You shall read one of the "Addresses" over and miss the puns, and it shall be quite as good, and better, than when you discover 'em. A Pun is a noble thing *per se*: O never lug it in as an accessory. A Pun is a sole object for Reflection (*vide my* "Aids" to that recessment from a savage state)—it is entire, it fills the mind; it is perfect as a sonnet, better. It limps ashamed in the train and retinue of Humour: it knows it should have an establish-

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

ment of its own. The one, for instance, I made the other day,—I forget what it was.

Hood will be gratified, as much as I am, by your mistake. I liked "Grimaldi" the best; it is true painting of abstract clownery, and that precious concrete of a clown: and the rich succession of images, and words almost such, in the first half of the "Magnum Ignatum." . . . Hood has just come in; his sick eyes sparkled into health when he read your approbation. They had meditated a copy for you, but postponed it till a neater second edition which is at hand. We are walking out to Enfield after our Beans and Bacon which are just smoking. Kindest remembrances to the G.'s ever. From Islington, 1st Day, 3rd month of my Hegira, or Flight from Leadenhall.

C. L., *Olim Clericus*.

### TO BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCLXXXIX.]

August 10, 1825.

We shall be soon again at Colebrook.

Dear B. B.—You must excuse my not writing before, when I tell you we are on a visit at Enfield, where I do not feel it natural to sit down to a letter. It is at all times an exertion. I would rather talk with you and Anne Knight quietly at Colebrook Lodge, over the matter of

## TO BARTON

your last. You mistake me when you express misgivings about my relishing a series of scriptural poems. I wrote confusedly. What I meant to say was, that one or two consolatory poems on deaths would have had a more condensed effect than many. Scriptural, devotional topics admit of infinite variety. So far from poetry tiring me because religious, I can read, and I say it seriously, the homely old version of the Psalms in our Prayer Books for an hour or two together sometimes without sense of weariness.

I did not express myself clearly about what I think a false topic insisted on so frequently in consolatory addresses on the death of infants. I know something like it is in Scripture, but I think humanly spoken. It is a natural thought, a sweet fallacy to the survivors, but still a fallacy. If it stands on the doctrine of this being a probationary state, it is liable to this dilemma. Omniscience, to whom possibility must be clear as act, must know of the child, what it would hereafter turn out: if good, then the topic is false to say it is secured from falling into future wilfulness, vice, etc. If bad, I do not see how its exemption from certain future overt acts, by being snatched away, at all tells in its favour. You stop the arm of a murderer, or arrest the finger of a pickpurse; but is not the guilt incurred as much by the intent as if never so much acted? Why children are hurried off, and old reprobates of a hundred left, whose trial

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

humanly we may think was complete at fifty, is among the obscurities of Providence. The very notion of a state of probation has darkness in it. The All-knower has no need of satisfying His eyes by seeing what we will do, when He knows before what we will do. Methinks we might be condemned before commission. In these things we grope and flounder, and if we can pick up a little human comfort that the child taken is snatched from vice (no great compliment to it, by the by), let us take it. And as to where an untried child goes, whether to join the assembly of its elders who have borne the heat of the day—fire-purified martyrs, and torment-sifted confessors—what know we ! We promise heaven, methinks, too cheaply and assign large revenues to minors, incompetent to manage them. Epitaphs run upon this topic of consolation, till the very frequency induces a cheapness. Tickets for admission into Paradise are sculptured out at a penny a letter, twopence a syllable, etc. It is all a mystery ; and the more I try to express my meaning (having none that is clear), the more I flounder. Finally, write what your own conscience, which to you is the unerring judge, seems best, and be careless about the whimsies of such a half-baked notionist as I am. We are here in a most pleasant country, full of walks, and idle to our hearts' desire. Taylor has dropt the *London*. It was indeed a dead weight. It has got in the Slough



## TO SOUTHEY

of Despond. I shuffle off my part of the pack, and stand like Christian with light and merry shoulders. It had got silly, indecorous, pert, and everything that is bad. Both our kind *remembrances* to Mrs. K. and yourself, and strangers'—greeting to Lucy (is it Lucy or Ruth?) that gathers wise sayings in a Book.

C. LAMB.

## TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

LETTER CCXC.]

*August 19, 1825.*

Dear Southey—You'll know who this letter comes from by opening slap-dash upon the text, as in the good old times. I never could come into the custom of envelopes; 'tis a modern foppery; the Plinian correspondence gives no hint of such. In singleness of sheet and meaning, then, I thank you for your little book. I am ashamed to add a codicil of thanks for your "Book of the Church." I scarce feel competent to give an opinion of the latter; I have not reading enough of that kind to venture at it. I can only say the fact, that I have read it with attention and interest. Being, as you know, not quite a Churchman, I felt a jealousy at the Church taking to herself the whole deserts of Christianity, Catholic and Protestant, from Druid extirpation downwards. I call all good Christians the

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

Church, Capillarians and all. But I am in too light a humour to touch these matters. May all our churches flourish! Two things staggered me in the poem (and one of them staggered both of us). I cannot away with a beautiful series of verses, as I protest they are, commencing "Jenner." 'Tis like a choice banquet opened with a pill or an electuary—physic stuff. T'other is, we cannot make out how Edith should be no more than ten years old. By'r Lady, we had taken her to be some sixteen or upwards. We suppose you have only chosen the round number for the metre. Or poem and dedication may be both older than they pretend to; but then some hint might have been given; for, as it stands, it may only serve some day to puzzle the parish reckoning. But without inquiring further (for 'tis ungracious to look into a lady's years), the dedication is eminently pleasing and tender, and we wish Edith May Southey joy of it. Something, too, struck us as if we had heard of the death of John May. A John May's death was a few years since in the papers. We think the tale one of the quietest, prettiest things we have seen. You have been temperate in the use of localities, which generally spoil poems laid in exotic regions. You mostly cannot stir out (in such things) for humming-birds and fire-flies. A tree is a Magnolia, etc.—Can I but like the truly Catholic spirit? "Blame as thou mayest

## TO SOUTHEY

the Papist's erring creed"—which, and other passages, brought me back to the old Anthology days, and the admonitory lesson to "Dear George" on the "The Vesper Bell," a little poem which retains its first hold upon me strangely.

The compliment to the translatress is daintily conceived. Nothing is choicer in that sort of writing than to bring in some remote, impossible parallel,—as between a great empress and the inobtrusive quiet soul who digged her noiseless way so perseveringly through that rugged Paraguay mine. How she Dobrizhoffer'd it all out, it puzzles my slender Latinity to conjecture. Why do you seem to sanction Landor's unfeeling allegorising away of honest Quixote ! He may as well say Strap is meant to symbolise the Scottish nation before the Union, and Random since that act of dubious issue ; or that Partridge means the Mystical Man, and Lady Bellaston typifies the Woman upon Many Waters. Gebir, indeed, may mean the state of the hop markets last month, for anything I know to the contrary. That all Spain overflowed with romancical books (as Madge Newcastle calls them) was no reason that Cervantes should not smile at the matter of them ; nor even a reason that, in another mood, he might not multiply them, deeply as he was tinctured with the essence of them. Quixote is the father of gentle ridicule, and at the same time the very depository and treasury of chivalry and highest notions. Marry, when somebody

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

persuaded Cervantes that he meant only fun, and put him upon writing that unfortunate Second Part with the confederacies of that unworthy duke and most contemptible duchess, Cervantes sacrificed his instinct to his understanding.

We got your little book but last night, being at Enfield, to which place we came about a month since, and are having quiet holydays. Mary walks her twelve miles a day some days, and I my twenty on others. 'Tis all holyday with me now, you know. The change works admirably.

For literary news, in my poor way, I have a one-act farce going to be acted at the Haymarket; but when? is the question. 'Tis an extravaganza, and like enough to follow *Mr. H.* The *London Magazine* has shifted its publishers once more, and I shall shift myself out of it. It is fallen. My ambition is not at present higher than to write nonsense for the play-houses, to eke out a somewhat contracted income. *Tempus erat.* There was a time, my dear Cornwallis, when the Muse, etc. But I am now in Mac Fleckno's predicament,—

“Promised a play, and dwindled to a farce.”

Coleridge is better (was, at least, a few weeks since) than he has been for years. His accomplishing his book at last has been a source of vigour to him. We are on a half visit to his

## TO HONE

friend Allsop, at a Mrs. Leishman's, Enfield, but expect to be at Colebrook Cottage in a week or so, where, or anywhere, I shall be always most happy to receive tidings from you. G. Dyer is in the height of an uxorious paradise. His honeymoon will not wane till he wax cold. Never was a more happy pair since Acme and Septimius, and longer. Farewell, with many thanks, dear S. Our loves to all round your Wrekin.

Your old friend,

C. LAMB.

## TO WILLIAM HONE

LETTER CCXCI.]

*September 30, 1825.*

Dear H.—I came home in a week from Enfield, worse than I went. My sufferings have been intense, but are abating. I begin to know what a little sleep is. My sister has sunk under her anxieties about me. She is laid up, deprived of reason for many weeks to come, I fear. She is in the same house, but we do not meet. It makes both worse. I can just hobble down as far as the “Angel” once a day ; further kills me. When I can stretch to Copenh[agen] Street I will. If you come this way any morning, I can only just shake you by the hand. This gloomy house does not admit of making my

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

friends welcome. You have come off triumphant with Bartholomew Fair.

Yours (writ with difficulty), C. LAMB.

Mr. Hone,  
Ludgate Hill.

TO THOMAS MANNING

LETTER CCXCII.]

December 10, 1825.

My dear M.—We have had sad ups and downs since you saw us, but we are at present *in* untroubled waters though not *by* them, for our old New River has taken a jaundice of the muds and rains, and looks as yellow as Miss ——.

Your red trunk (not *hose*, tho' a flame-coloured pair was once esteemed a luxury) is safe deposited at the Peacock, who by the by is worth your seeing. She has had her tail brushed up, and looks as pert as *A-goose* with a hundred eyes in *My-thology*: I don't know what *yours* says of it. Your gown will be at the Bell, Totteridge, by the Telegraph on Monday; time enough, I hope, to go out to the curate's to an early Tea in it. We have a corner at *double dumbee* for you, whenever you are disposed to change your Inn.

Believe us, yours as ever,

CHARLES AND MARY LAMB.

*From Colebrook, this Saturday,  
the 10th of December 1825.*

## TO OLLIER

TO CHARLES OLLIER

LETTER CCXCIII.] *Colebrook Cottage, Colebrook Row,  
Tuesday [January 1826].*

Dear Ollier—I send you two more proverbs, which will be the last of this batch, unless I send you one more by the post on THURSDAY ; none will come after that day ; so do not leave any open room in that case. Hood sups with me to-night. Can you come and eat grouse ? 'Tis not often I offer at delicacies.

Yours most kindly,

C. LAMB.

LETTER CCXCIV.] *January 1826.*

Dear O.—We lamented your absence last night. The grouse were piquant : the backs incomparable. You must come in to cold mutton and oysters some evening. Name your evening ; though I have qualms at the distance. Do you never leave early ? My head is very queerish, and indisposed for much company ; but we will get Hood, that half Hogarth, to meet you. The scrap I send should come in AFTER the “ Rising with the Lark.”

Yours truly.

Colburn, I take it, pays postages.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

TO BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCXCV.]

February 7, 1826.

Dear B. B.—I got your book not more than five days ago, so am not so negligent as I must have appeared to you with a fortnight's sin upon my shoulders. I tell you with sincerity, that I think you have completely succeeded in what you intended to do. What is poetry may be disputed. These are poetry, to me at least. They are concise, pithy, and moving. Uniform as they are, and untristorify'd, I read them through at two sittings, without one sensation approaching to tedium. I do not know that among your many kind presents of this nature, this is not my favourite volume. The language is never lax, and there is a unity of design and feeling. You wrote them *with love*—to avoid the cox-combical phrase, *con amore*. I am particularly pleased with the "Spiritual Law," pages 34 and 35. It reminded me of Quarles, and "holy Mr. Herbert," as Izaak Walton calls him; the two best, if not only, of our devotional poets, though some prefer Watts, and some *Tom Moore*. I am far from well, or in my right spirits, and shudder at pen-and-ink work. I poke out a monthly crudity for Colburn in his magazine, which I call "Popular Fallacies," and periodically crush a proverb or two, setting up



## TO BARTON

my folly against the wisdom of nations. Do you see the *New Monthly*?

One word I must object to in your little book, and it recurs more than once—*fadeless* is no genuine compound; loveless is, because love is a noun as well as verb; but what is a fade? And I do not quite like whipping the Greek drama upon the back of “Genesis,” page 8. I do not like praise handed in by disparagement; as I objected to a side censure on Byron, etc., in the “Lines on Bloomfield.” With these poor cavils excepted, your verses are without a flaw.

C. LAMB.

LETTER CCXCVI.]

March 20, 1826.

Dear B. B.—You may know my letters by the paper and the folding. For the former, I live on scraps obtained in charity from an old friend, whose stationery is a permanent perquisite; for folding, I shall do it neatly when I learn to tie my neckcloths. I surprise most of my friends by writing to them on ruled paper, as if I had not got past pot-hooks and hangers. Sealing-wax, I have none on my establishment; wafers of the coarsest bran supply its place. When my epistles come to be weighed with Pliny's, however superior to the Roman in delicate irony, judicious reflections, etc., his gilt post will bribe over the judges to him. All the time I was at the E. I. H. I never mended a

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

pen ; I now cut 'em to the stumps, marring rather than mending the primitive goose-quill. I cannot bear to pay for articles I used to get for nothing. When Adam laid out his first penny upon nonpareils at some stall in Mesopotamos, I think it went hard with him, reflecting upon his old goodly orchard, where he had so many for nothing. When I write to a great man at the Court end, he opens with surprise upon a naked note, such as Whitechapel people interchange, with no sweet degrees of envelope. I never enclosed one bit of paper in another, nor understood the rationale of it. Once only I sealed with borrowed wax, to set Walter Scott a wondering, signed with the imperial quartered arms of England, which my friend Field gives in compliment to his descent, in the female line, from Oliver Cromwell. It must have set his antiquarian curiosity upon watering. To your questions upon the currency, I refer you to Mr. Robinson's last speech, where, if you can find a solution, I can not. I think this, though, the best ministry we ever stumbled upon ;—gin reduced four shillings in the gallon, wine two shillings in the quart ! This comes home to men's minds and bosoms. My tirade against visitors was not meant *particularly* at you or A. K——. I scarce know what I meant, for I do not just now feel the grievance. I wanted to make an *article*. So in another thing I talked of somebody's *insipid wife*, without a correspond-

## TO COLERIDGE

ent object in my head : and a good lady, a friend's wife, whom I really *love* (don't startle, I mean in a licit way), has looked shyly on me ever since. The blunders of personal application are ludicrous. I send out a character every now and then, on purpose to exercise the ingenuity of my friends. "Popular Fallacies" will go on ; that word "concluded" is an erratum, I suppose, for "continued." I do not know how it got stuffed in there. A little thing without name will also be printed on the Religion of the Actors, but it is out of your way, so I recommend you, with true author's hypocrisy, to skip it. We are about to sit down to roast beef, at which we could wish A. K., B. B., and B. B.'s pleasant daughter to be humble partakers. So much for my hint at visitors, which was scarcely calculated for droppers-in from Woodbridge ; the sky does not drop such larks every day. My very kindest wishes to you all three, with my sister's best love.

C. LAMB.

## TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

LETTER CCXCVII.]

March 22, 1826.

Dear Coleridge—We will with great pleasure be with you on Thursday in the next week early. May we venture to bring Emma with us ? Your finding out my style in your nephew's pleasant book is surprising to me. I want eyes

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

to descry it. You are a little too hard upon his morality, though I confess he has more of Sterne about him than of Sternhold. But he saddens into excellent sense before the conclusion. Your query shall be submitted to Miss Kelly, though it is obvious that the pantomime, when done, will be more easy to decide upon than in proposal. I say, do it by all means. I have Decker's play by me, if you can filch anything out of it. Miss Gray, with her kitten eyes, is an actress, though she shows it not at all; and pupil to the former, whose gestures she mimics in comedy to the disparagement of her own natural manner, which is agreeable. It is funny to see her bridling up her neck, which is native to F. K.; but there is no setting the manners of others upon one's shoulders any more than their head. I am glad you esteem Manning, though you see but his husk or shrine. He discloses not, save to select worshippers, and will leave the world without any one hardly but me knowing how stupendous a creature he is. I am perfecting myself in the "Ode to Eton College" against Thursday, that I may not appear unclassic. I have just discovered that it is much better than the "Elegy."

In haste,

C. L.

*P.S.*—I do not know what to say to your *latest* theory about Nero being the Messiah, though by all accounts he was a 'nointed one.

## TO CARY

TO THE REV. H. F. CARY

LETTER CCXCVIII.]

*April 3, 1826.*

Dear Sir—It is whispered me that you will not be unwilling to look into our doleful hermitage. Without more preface, you will gladden our cell by accompanying our old chums of the *London*, Darley and A[llan] C[unningham], to Enfield on Wednesday. You shall have hermit's fare, with talk as seraphical as the novelty of the divine life will permit, with an innocent retrospect to the world which we have left, when I will thank you for your hospitable offer at Chiswick, and with plain hermit reasons evince the necessity of abiding here.

Without hearing from you, then, you shall give us leave to expect you. I have long had it on my conscience to invite you, but spirits have been low ; and I am indebted to chance for this awkward but most sincere invitation.

Yours, with best loves to Mrs. Cary,

C. LAMB.

D. knows all about the coaches. Oh for a Museum in the wilderness !

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

TO VINCENT NOVELLO

LETTER CCXCIX.]

May 9, 1826.

Dear N.—You will not expect us to-morrow, I am sure, while these damn'd North-Easters continue. We must wait the Zephyrs' pleasure. By the bye, I was at Highgate on Wednesday, the only one of the party.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

*Summer*, as my friend Coleridge waggishly writes, has set in with its usual severity.

Kind remembces. to Mrs. Novello, etc.

TO BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCC.]

May 16, 1826.

Dear B. B.—I have had no spirits lately to begin a letter to you, though I am under obligations to you (how many !) for your neat little poem. 'Tis just what it professes to be, a simple tribute, in chaste verse, serious and sincere.

I do not know how friends will relish it, but we out-lyers, honorary friends, like it very well. I have had my head and ears stuffed up with the East winds : a continual ringing in my brain of bells jangled, or the spheres touched by some

## TO BARTON

raw angel. Is it not George the Third trying the Hundredth Psalm? I get my music for nothing. But the weather seems to be softening, and will thaw my stunnings. Coleridge, writing to me a week or two since, begins his note—"Summer has set in with its usual severity." A cold Summer is all I know of disagreeable in cold. I do not mind the utmost rigour of real Winter, but these smiling hypocrites of Mays wither me to death. My head has been a ringing chaos, like the day the winds were made, before they submitted to the discipline of a weathercock, before the quarters were made. In the street, with the blended noises of life about me, I hear, and my head is lightened; but in a room the hubbub comes back, and I am deaf as a sinner. Did I tell you of a pleasant sketch Hood has done, which he calls—"Very deaf indeed"? It is of a good-natured stupid-looking old gentleman, whom a footpad has stopped, but for his extreme deafness cannot make him understand what he wants. The unconscious old gentleman is extending his ear-trumpet very complacently, and the fellow is firing a pistol into it to make him hear, but the ball will pierce his skull sooner than the report will reach his sensorium. I choose a very little bit of paper, for my ear hisses when I bend down to write. I can hardly read a book, for I miss that small soft voice which the idea of articulated words raises (almost imperceptibly

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

to you) in a silent reader. I seem too deaf to see what I read. But with a touch or two of returning zephyr my head will melt. What lies you poets tell about the May! It is the most ungenial part of the year. Cold crocuses, cold primroses, you take your blossoms in ice—a painted sun.

“Unmeaning joy around appears,  
And Nature smiles as if she sneers.”

It is ill with me when I begin to look which way the wind sets. Ten years ago, I literally did not know the point from the broad end of the vane, which it was that indicated the quarter. I hope these ill winds have blown *over* you as they do through me.

Kindest remembrances to you and yours.

C. L.

TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

LETTER CCCI.]

June 1, 1826.

Dear Coleridge—If I know myself, nobody more detests the display of personal vanity, which is implied in the act of sitting for one's picture, than myself. But the fact is, that the likeness which accompanies this letter was stolen from my person at one of my unguarded moments by some too partial artist, and my friends are pleased to think that he has not much flattered me. Whatever its merits may be, you, who



## TO DIBDIN

have so great an interest in the original, will have a satisfaction in tracing the features of one that has so long esteemed you. There are times when in a friend's absence these graphic representations of him almost seem to bring back the man himself. The painter, whoever he was, seems to have taken me in one of those disengaged moments, if I may so term them, when the native character is so much more honestly displayed than can be possible in the restraints of an enforced sitting attitude. Perhaps it rather describes me as a thinking man, than a man in the act of thought. Whatever its pretensions, I know it will be dear to you, towards whom I should wish my thoughts to flow in a sort of an undress rather than in the more studied graces of diction.

I am, dear Coleridge, yours sincerely,

C. LAMB.

## To J. B. DIBDIN

LETTER CCCII.]

*Friday, some day in June, 1826.*

Dear D.—My first impulse upon opening your letter was pleasure at seeing your old neat hand, nine parts gentlemanly with a modest dash of the clerical: my second, a Thought, natural enough this hot weather — am I to answer all this? Why 'tis as long as those to the Ephesians and Galatians put together, I have counted the words for curiosity. . . . I never

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

knew an enemy to puns who was not an ill-natured man. Your fair critic in the coach reminds me of a Scotchman who assured me he did not see much in Shakspeare. I replied, I dare say *not*. He felt the equivoke, looked awkward and reddish, but soon returned to the attack by saying that he thought Burns was as good as Shakspeare. I said that I had no doubt he was—to a *Scotchman*. We exchanged no more words that day. Your account of the fierce faces in the Hangings, with the presumed interlocution of the Eagle and the Tiger, amused us greatly. You cannot be so very bad while you can pick mirth off from rotten walls. But let me hear you have escaped out of your oven. . . . Your business, I take it, is bathing, not baking.

Let me hear that you have clambered up to Lover's Seat : it is as fine in that neighbourhood as Juan Fernandez—as lonely, too, when the Fishing-boats are not out ; I have sat for hours, staring upon a shipless sea. The salt sea is never so grand as when it is left to itself. One cock-boat spoils it—a sea-mew or two improves it. And go to the little church which is a very Protestant Loretto, and seems dropt by some angel for the use of a hermit who was at once parishioner and a whole parish. It is not too big. Go in the night ; bring it away in your portmanteau, and I will plant it in my garden. It must have been erected in the very infancy of

## TO DIBDIN

British Christianity, for the two or three first converts ; yet with it all the appertances of a church of the first magnitude—its pulpit, its pews, its baptismal font ; a cathedral in a nutshell. Seven people would crowd it like a Caledonian Chapel. The minister that divides the Word there must give lumping pennyworths. It is built to the text of “two or three assembled in my name.” It reminds me of the grain of mustard seed. If the glebe-land is proportionate it may yield two potatoes. Tithes out of it could be no more split than a hair. Its First fruits must be its Last, for ’twould never produce a couple. It is truly the strait and narrow way, and few there be (of London visitants) that find it. The still small voice is surely to be found there, if anywhere. A sounding-board is merely there for ceremony. It is secure from earthquakes, not more from sanctity than size, for ’twould feel a mountain thrown upon it no more than a taper-worm would. *Go and see, but not without your spectacles.* By the way, there’s a capital farm-house two-thirds of the way to the Lover’s Seat, with incomparable plum cake, ginger-beer, etc. Mary bids me warn you not to read the *Anatomy of Melancholy* in your present *low way*. You’ll fancy yourself a pipkin or a headless bear, as Burton speaks of. You’ll be lost in a maze of remedies for a labyrinth of diseasements—a plethora of cures. Read Fletcher ; above all the *Spanish Curate*, the *Thief*, or *Little*

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

*Night Walker*, the *Wit Without Money*, and the *Lover's Pilgrimage*. Laugh and come home fat. Neither do we think Sir T. Browne quite the thing for you just at present. Fletcher is as light as soda-water. Browne and Burton are too strong potions for an Invalid. And don't thumb and dirt the books. Take care of the bindings. Lay a leaf of silver paper under 'em as you read them. And don't smoke tobacco over 'em—the leaves will fall in and burn or dirty their namesakes. If you find any dusty atoms of the Indian Weed crumbled up in the Beaumont and Fletcher, they are *mine*. But then, you know, so is the Folio also. A pipe and a comedy of Fletcher's the last thing of a night is the best recipe for light dreams, and to scatter away Nightmares. *Probatum est*. But do as you like about the former. Only, cut the Baker's. You will come home else all crust; Rankings must chip you before you can appear in his counting-house. And, my dear Peter Fin Junr., do contrive to see the sea at least once before you return. You'll be asked about it in the Old Jewry. It will appear singular not to have seen it. And rub up your Muse—the family Muse—and send us a rhyme or so. Don't waste your wit upon that damned Dry Salter. I never knew but one Dry Salter who could relish those mellow effusions, and he broke. You knew Tommy Hill, the wittiest of Dry Salters. Dry Salters! what a word for

## TO DIBDIN

this thirsty weather ! I must drink after it.  
Here's to thee, my dear Dibdin, and to our  
having you again snug and well at Colebrooke.  
But our nearest hopes are to hear again from  
you shortly. An epistle only a quarter as agree-  
able as your last would be a treat.

Yours most truly,

C. LAMB.

Timothy B. Dibdin, Esq.,  
No. 9, Blucher Row,  
Priory, Hastings.

LETTER CCCIII.]

July 14, 1826.

BECAUSE you boast poetic grandsire,  
And rhyming kin, both uncle *and* sire,  
Dost think that none but *their* descendings  
Can tickle folks with double endings ?  
I had a Dad that would for half a bet  
Have put down thine thro' half the alphabet.  
Thou who would be Dan Prior the Second,  
For Dan Posterior must be reckoned.  
In faith, dear Tim, your rhymes are slovenly,  
As a man may say, dough-baked and ovenly ;  
Tedious and long as two Long Acres,  
And smell most vilely of the Baker's.  
(I have been cursing every limb o' thee,  
Because I could not hitch in *Timothy*.  
Jack, Will, Tom, Dick's a serious evil,  
But Tim, plain Tim's the very Devil.)  
Thou most incorrigible scribbler,  
Right Watering Place and Cockney Dribbler,

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

What *child*, that barely understands *A*  
*B C*, would ever dream that stanza  
Would tinkle into rhyme with "Plan, Sir" ?  
Go, go—you are not worth an answer.  
I had a sire, that at plain Crambo  
Had hit you o'er the head a damn'd blow.  
How now ? may I die game, and you die brass,  
But I had stol'n a quip from Hudibras !  
'Twas thinking on that fine old suttler,  
That was in faith a second Butler ;  
Had as queer rhymes as he, and subtler.  
He would have put you to 't this weather  
For rattling syllables together.  
Rhymed you to death, like "rats in Ireland,"  
Except that he was born in High'r Land.  
His chimes, not cramped like thine, and rung ill,  
Had made Job split his sides on dunghill.  
There was no limit to his merryings  
At christ'nings, weddings, nay at burials.  
No undertaker would live near him,  
Those grave practitioners did fear him ;  
Mutes, at his merry mops, turned "vocal,"  
And fellows, hired for silence, "spoke all."  
No *body* could be laid in cavity  
Long as he lived, with proper gravity.  
His mirth-fraught eye had but to glitter,  
And every mourner round must titter.  
The Parson, prating of Mount Hermon,  
Stood still to laugh in midst of sermon.  
The final sexton (smile he *must* for him)  
Could hardly get to "dust to dust" for him.

## TO DIBDIN

He lost three pall-bearers their livelihood,  
Only with simpering at his lively mood :  
Provided that they fresh and neat came,  
All jests were fish that to his net came.  
He'd banter Apostolic castings  
As you jeer fishermen at Hastings.  
When the fly bit, *like me*, he leapt o'er all,  
And stood not much on what was Scriptural.

*P.S.* I had forgot, at Small Bohemia \*  
(Enquire the way of your maid, Euphemia)  
Are sojourning, of all good fellows  
The prince and princess, the *Novellos*.  
Pray seek 'em out, and give my love to 'em ;  
You'll find you'll soon be hand and glove to 'em.  
C. L.

\* In prose, Little Bohemia, about a mile from Hastings in the Hollington Road, when you can get as far. This letter will introduce you, if 'tis agreeable. Take a donkey—'tis Novello the Composer and his wife, our very good friends. Dear Dib, I find relief in a word or two of prose. In truth my rhymes come slow. You have "routh of 'em." It gives us pleasure to find you keep your good spirits. Your letter did us good. Pray Heaven you are got out at last. Write quickly.

For Tim Dibdin,  
At No. 4 Meadow Cottages,  
Hastings.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

TO WILLIAM HONE

LETTER CCCIV.]

[*Enfield, July 25, 1826.*]

Dear H.—The Quotidian came in as pleasantly as it was looked for at breakfast time yesterday. You have repaid my poor stanzas with interest. This last interlineation is one of those instances of affectation rightly applied. Read the sentence without it, how bald it is ! Your idea of “worsted in the dog-days” was capital.

We are here so comfortable that I am confident we shall stay one month, from this date, most probably longer ; so if you please, you can cut your out-of-town room for that time. I have sent up my petit farce altered ; and Harley is at the theatre now. It cannot come out for some weeks. When it does, we think not of leaving her, but to borrow a bed of you for the night.

I write principally to say that the 4th of August is coming,—Dogget’s Coat and Badge Day on the water. You will find a good deal about him in *Cibber’s Apology*, octavo, facing the window ; and something haply in a thin blackish quarto among the plays, facing the fireside.

You have done with mad dogs ; else there is a print of Rowlandson’s, or somebody’s, of people



## TO DIBDIN

in pursuit of one in a village, which might have come in : also Goldsmith's verses.

Mary's kind remembrance. C. LAMB.

Mr. Hone,  
Colebrook Cottage,  
Islington.

## To J. B. DIBDIN

LETTER CCCV.]

*Saturday, September 9, 1826.*

An answer is requested.

Dear D.—I have observed that a Letter is never more acceptable than when received upon a rainy day, especially a rainy Sunday ; which moves me to send you somewhat, however short. This will find you sitting after Breakfast, which you will have prolonged as far as you can with consistency to the poor handmaid that has the reversion of the Tea Leaves ; making two nibbles of your last morsel of *stale* roll (you cannot have hot new ones on the Sabbath), and reluctantly coming to an end, because when that is done, what can you do till dinner ? You cannot go to the Beach, for the rain is drowning the sea, turning rank Thetis fresh, taking the brine out of Neptune's pickles, while mermaids sit upon rocks with umbrellas, their ivory combs sheathed for spoiling in the wet of waters foreign to them. You cannot go to the Library, for it's shut. You

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

are not religious enough to go to Church. O it is worth while to cultivate piety to the gods, to have something to fill the heart up on a wet Sunday. You cannot cast accounts, for your Ledger is being eaten up with moths in the Ancient Jewry. You cannot play at Draughts, for there is none to play with you, and besides there is not a draught-board in the house. You cannot go to market, for it closed last night. You cannot look into the shops, their backs are shut upon you. You cannot while away an hour with a friend, for you have no friend round that Wrekin. You cannot divert yourself with a stray acquaintance, for you have picked none up. You cannot bear the chiming of Bells, for they invite you to a banquet where you are no visitant. You cannot cheer yourself with the prospect of to-morrow's letter, for none come on Mondays. You cannot count those endless vials on the mantelpiece with any hope of making a variation in their numbers. You have counted your spiders : your Bastile is exhausted. You sit and deliberately curse your hard exile from all familiar sights and sounds. Old Ranking poking in his head unexpectedly would just now be as good to you as Grimaldi. Anything to deliver you from this intolerable weight of ennui. You are too ill to shake it off : not ill enough to submit to it, and to lie down as a Lamb under it. The Tyranny of sickness is nothing to the cruelty of Convalescence : 'tis to have Thirty

## TO DIBDIN

Tyrants for one. That pattering rain drops on your brain. You'll be worse after dinner, for you must dine at one to-day that Betty may go to afternoon service. She insists upon having her chopped hay. And then when she goes out, who *was* something to you, something to speak to—what an interminable afternoon you'll have to go thro'. You can't break yourself from your locality : you cannot say, "to-morrow morning I set off for Banstead," for you are booked for Wednesday. Foreseeing this, I thought a *cheerful letter* would come in opportunely. If any of the little topics for mirth I have thought upon should serve you in this utter extinguishment of sunshine, to make you a little merry, I shall have had my ends. I love to make things comfortable. . . . That which is scratched out was the most material thing I had to say, but on maturer thoughts I defer it.

*P.S.*—We are just sitting down to dinner with a pleasant party—Coleridge, Reynolds the dramatist, and Sam Bloxam : to-morrow (that is, *to-day*), Liston and Wyat of the Wells, dine with us. May this find you as jolly and freakish as we mean to be.

C. LAMB.

Addressed—

T. Dibdin, Esq.,  
4 Meadow Cottages,  
Hastings.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

TO BERNARD BARTON

LETTER CCCVI.]

*September 26, 1826.*

Dear B. B.—I don't know why I have delayed so long writing. 'Twas a fault. The under-current of excuse to my mind was that I had heard of the vessel in which Mitford's jars were to come ; that it had been obliged to put into Batavia to refit (which accounts for its delay), but was daily expected. Days are past, and it comes not, and the mermaids may be drinking their tea out of his china for aught I know ; but let's hope not. In the meantime I have paid £28, etc., for the freight and prime cost, which I a little expected he would have settled in London. But do not mention it. I was enabled to do it by a receipt of £30 from Colburn, with whom, however, I have done. I should else have run short ; for I only just make ends meet. We will wait the arrival of the trinkets, and to ascertain their full expense, and then bring in the bill. Don't mention it, for I daresay 'twas mere thoughtlessness. I am sorry you and yours have any plagues about dross matters. I have been sadly puzzled at the defalcation of more than one-third of my income, out of which when entire I saved nothing. But cropping off wine, old books, etc. etc., in short, all that can be called pocket-money, I hope to be able to go

## TO BARTON

on at the cottage. Remember, I beg of you not to say anything to Mitford, for if he be honest it will vex him : if not, which I as little expect as that you should be, I have a hank still upon the jars.

Colburn had something of mine in last month, which he has had in hand these seven months, and had lost, or couldn't find room for : I was used to different treatment in the *London*, and have forsworn periodicals. I am going thro' a course of reading at the Museum : the Garrick plays, out of part of which I formed my specimens. I have two thousand to go thro'; and in a few weeks have despatched the tythe of 'em. It is a sort of office to me; hours, ten to four, the same. It does me good. Man must have regular occupation, that has been used to it.

So A. K. keeps a school; she teaches nothing wrong, I'll answer for't. I have a Dutch print of a schoolmistress; little old-fashioned Fleminglings, with only one face among them. She a princess of a schoolmistress, wielding a rod for form more than use; the scene, an old monastic chapel, with a Madonna over her head, looking just as serious, as thoughtful, as pure, as gentle as herself. 'Tis a type of thy friend.

Will you pardon my neglect? Mind, again I say, don't show this to M.; let me wait a little longer to know the event of his luxuries.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

I am sure he is a good fellow, tho' I made a serious Yorkshire lad stare when I said he was a clergyman. He is a pleasant layman spoiled. Heaven send him his jars uncrack'd, and me my ——

Yours, with kindest wishes to your daughter  
and friend, in which Mary joins, C. L.

LETTER CCCVII.]

[End of 1826.]

Dear B. B. (the *Busy Bee*, as Hood after Dr. Watts apostrophises thee, and well dost thou deserve it for thy labours in the Muses' gardens, wandering over parterres of Think-on-mes and Forget-me-nots, to a total impossibility of forgetting thee), thy letter was acceptable, thy scruples may be dismissed, thou art *rectus in curiâ*, not a word more to be said, *verbum sapienti*, and so forth, the matter is decided with a white stone, classically, mark me, and the apparitions vanish'd which haunted me, only the cramp, Caliban's distemper, clawing me in the calvish part of my nature, makes me ever and anon roar bullishly, squeak cowardishly, and limp cripple-ishly. Do I write quakerly and simply, 'tis my most Master Mathew's like intention to do it. See Ben Jonson.—I think you told me your acquaintance with the Drama was confin'd to Shakspeare and Miss Baillie: some read only Milton and Croly. The gap is as from an ananas to a turnip. I have fighting in my head

## TO BARTON

the plots, characters, situations, and sentiments of 400 old plays (bran new to me) which I have been digesting at the Museum, and my appetite sharpens to twice as many more, which I mean to course over this Winter. I can scarce avoid dialogue fashion in this letter. I soliloquise my meditations, and habitually speak dramatic blank verse without meaning it. Do you see Mitford? He will tell you something of my labours. Tell him I am sorry to have missed seeing him, to have talked over those old Treasures. I am still more sorry for his missing Pots. But I shall be sure of the earliest intelligence of the Lost Tribes. His Sacred Specimens are a thankful addition to my shelves. Marry, I could wish he had been more careful of corrigenda. I have discover'd certain which have slipt his errata. I put 'em in the next page, as perhaps thou canst transmit them to him; for what purpose but to grieve him (which yet I should be sorry to do), but then it shows my learning, and the excuse is complimentary, as it implies their correction in a future edition. His own things in the book are magnificent, and as an old Christ's Hospitaller I was particularly refresh'd with his eulogy on our Edward. Many of the choice excerpta were new to me. Old Christmas is a-coming, to the confusion of Puritans, Muggletonians, Anabaptists, Quakers, and that unwassailing crew. He cometh not with his wonted gait; he is shrunk nine inches

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

in his girth, but is yet a lusty fellow. Hood's book is mighty clever, and went off 600 copies the first day. Sion's Songs do not disperse so quickly. The next leaf is for Rev. J. M. In this adieu, thine briefly, in a tall friendship,

C. LAMB.



# NOTES

## CHAPTER IV

1817—1823

LETTER CLXXXIII (p. 1).—William Ayrton (1777-1858), Director of the Music at the King's Theatre in 1816. Famous as an impresario and as a musical critic. He edited Charles Knight's *Musical Library*, which did so much to popularise the best composers in this country. He was the first to produce *Don Giovanni* in England, in April of this year.

*The late Mr. Mellish.* Mr. Mellish, of Enfield, for many years M.P. for Middlesex. He made a large fortune as an army contractor. Whether he ever committed himself to opinions on poetical matters I do not know.

LETTER CLXXXIV (p. 5).—Mr. Barron Field ; born 23rd October 1786 ; practised at the Bar for some years, going the Oxford Circuit. In 1816 he married and went out to New South Wales as Judge of the Supreme Court at Sydney. He returned to England in 1824, having resigned his post, and was afterwards appointed Chief-Justice of Gibraltar. See the *Elia* Essay, "Distant Correspondents." "Botany Bay" is now so much a matter of history that Lamb's allusions to the criminal population, among whom he pictures his old friend as living, almost require explanation.

"So thievish 'tis, that the eighth commandment itself  
Scarce seemeth there to be"

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

is of course a parody of Coleridge's lines in the "Ancient Mariner"—

"So lonely 'twas that God Himself  
Scarce seemèd there to be."

The reader will not have much difficulty in separating the "lies," to which Lamb pleads guilty in the various pieces of intelligence here transmitted, from the truths. If the Mitchell mentioned was Thomas Mitchell, the translator of Aristophanes, he did not die till many years later, and Mr. Thomas Barnes became the famous editor of the *Times* instead of going to Demerara or Essequibo. George Dyer, on the other hand, was actually one of the six executors and residuary legatees under the will of Lord Stanhope. "Mr. Lawrey" was the Rev. Walter Lawry, a Wesleyan minister (*Bibliotheca Cornub.* vols. i. and iii.).

LETTER CLXXXV (p. 7).—*We have left the Temple.* Lamb and his sister had lived for about nine years in Mitre Court Buildings, and for about the same period in Inner Temple Lane.

LETTER CLXXXVII (p. 12).—*The Garden of England,* Covent Garden.

*Southey's curse.* *The Curse of Kehama.*

*Coleridge's state and affairs.* The new course of lectures, here spoken of as contemplated by Coleridge, were delivered early in the year following at a lecture-room in Flower de Luce Court, Fleet Street.

LETTER CLXXXVIII (p. 13).—This brief note is worth printing, because it led to the remarkable evening at Haydon's, when Lamb met Keats, Wordsworth, and the Comptroller of Stamps. See Haydon's *Diaries*, or my *Memoir of Lamb*.

LETTER CLXXXIX (p. 13).—*W. H. goes on lecturing against W. W.* Hazlitt's Lectures on the English Poets, delivered at the Surrey Institution.

LETTER CXC (p. 20).—The "books" here referred to are the collected edition of Lamb's works in two volumes, published in 1818 by the Olliers. The letter to Southey that follows is also on the subject of the new publication.

## NOTES

LETTER CXCH (p. 23).—The “ticket” here mentioned was apparently for two courses of lectures delivered by Coleridge in December 1818 at the Crown and Anchor Tavern in the Strand.

LETTER CXCH (p. 24).—*To John Chambers.* Mr. Chambers was a fellow-clerk with Lamb in the India House, and one of his most intimate friends in the office. This letter, formerly in the possession of the late Mr. George Bentley, of New Burlington Street, was first printed by me with his most kind permission. The circumstances under which this tissue of audacious invention and wildest humour was penned are not hard to divine. Mr. Chambers was clearly kept away from business by an attack of eczema, or some kindred affection of the skin, and Lamb, after a fashion of which there are many other instances, sits down to amuse the absent invalid by supplying him with material for a hearty laugh. The “intelligence” forwarded is of course the simplest romance, grounded in each case, we may suppose, on certain bodily or mental peculiarities in the office clerks respectively named. The anecdote of Mr. Bye’s sonnets and their resemblance to Petrarch has been so often quoted from this letter, though unpublished, as to have become already historical. The few notes that follow are taken from some memoranda supplied by the late Mr. H. G. Bohn, from whose collection the letter passed into the hands of Mr. Bentley.

The letter is addressed to Mr. John Chambers, Leamington, Warwick.

*As Venn would say.* Mr. Venn was an auctioneer.

*As D—— does before 12 o’Clock.* “Mr. Dowley, who was clerk and office-assistant to Mr. Chambers.”

*Wadd and Plumley.* Wadd was son of a Rev. Dr. Wadd ; Plumley was the son of a silversmith on Ludgate Hill. *Hyde* was a clerk in the same office, familiarly called Old Jemmy Hyde. He claimed to be descended from Lord Chancellor Hyde. *Friend* “eventually became chief clerk when the Company passed into the hands of the Government.” *Bye*, “another clerk in the same office, and held to be very stupid ; got into debt and was dismissed.” See Letter to Manning of 28th May 1819. Mr. Bohn adds that “this letter is evidently complete although it ends abruptly and is not signed.”

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LETTER CXCIV (p. 28).—*A copy of "Peter Bell."* The verses to which Lamb here refers were those which J. Hamilton Reynolds wrote and published a few days in advance of Wordsworth's "Peter Bell," in ridicule of the poet. The squib, issued from the publishing house of Taylor and Hessey, bore on its title-page, *Peter Bell: A Lyrical Ballad*. I do affirm that I am the *real* Simon Pure." It consists of some fifty stanzas, roughly imitated from the actual metre of Wordsworth's poem. It was furnished with a prose Preface and Appendix. The opening lines of the former may be cited as giving some idea of the insolent spirit in which the whole *jeu d'esprit* was conceived:—"It is now a period of one-and-twenty years since I first wrote some of the most perfect compositions (except certain pieces I have written in my later days) that ever dropped from poetical pen. My heart hath been right and powerful all its years. I never thought an evil or a weak thought in my life. It has been my aim and my achievement to deduce moral thunder from buttercups, daisies, celandines, and (as a poet, scarcely inferior to myself, hath it) 'such small deer,' etc. etc. etc. The verses that follow are composed by stringing together allusions to Alice Fell, Betty Foy, Harry Gill, and other names from Wordsworth's best-known ballads, with phrases and mannerisms borrowed from the more mawkish of his earlier poems. It may be added that it was the publication of this *first* "Peter Bell," to which Wordsworth's came *second*, that explains Shelley writing a "Peter Bell the *Third*."

*Rogers has been re-writing your Poem of the Strid.* Rogers wrote a poem on the same incident as that of Wordsworth's "Force of Prayer: or, The Founding of Bolton Priory." Rogers's poem was called "The Boy of Egremond," and the first two lines of it—

" 'Say what remains when Hope is fled?'  
She answered, 'Endless weeping,' "

were, in some later editions of Wordsworth's poems, prefixed as a motto to his "Force of Prayer."

*How do you like my way of writing with two inks?* This letter was actually so written, in lines of black and red ink alternately.

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LETTER CXCV (p. 31).—*The Gladmans of Wheathamstead*. Lamb had relations in Hertfordshire, where his grandmother, Mrs. Field, resided so long. See the Essay, "Mackery End in H——shire," and notes upon it, in my edition of *Elia*.

*Tommy Bye*. See preceding letter to Mr. Chambers. Mrs. Gold was the married name of Miss Burrell, the actress. Manning was now once more in England after his long absence in China. This letter was addressed to him at Ware in Hertfordshire.

LETTER CXCVI (p. 34).—*How proud we are here of the dedication*. Wordsworth had just published his early poem "The Waggoner," in compliance with Lamb's request made in a former letter. It appeared, with a few shorter poems, in 1819, with the following dedication to Lamb:—

"My dear Friend—When I sent you, a few weeks ago, 'The Tale of Peter Bell,' you asked 'Why "The Waggoner" was not added?' To say the truth, from the higher tone of imagination, and the deeper touches of passion aimed at in the former, I apprehended this little piece could not accompany it without disadvantage. In the year 1806, if I am not mistaken, 'The Waggoner' was read to you in manuscript, and as you have remembered it for so long a time, I am the more encouraged to hope that, since the localities on which the poem partly depends did not prevent its being interesting to you, it may prove acceptable to others. Being, therefore, in some measure the cause of its present appearance, you must allow me the gratification of inscribing it to you, in acknowledgment of the pleasure I have derived from your writings, and of the high esteem with which

"I am very truly yours,

"WILLIAM WORDSWORTH."

*Benjamin* is the waggoner's name.

*Mary Sabilla Novello*. The wife of Vincent Novello, the eminent composer and organist.

LETTER CXCVII (p. 38).—This letter to Lamb's old friend Joseph Cottle, publisher and poet of Bristol, has, I venture to think, an interesting history attached to it. This and the following two letters were first printed by Cottle in

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his *Early Recollections of Coleridge*, published in 1837. Cottle gave the date of the first two correctly (1819), but by some oversight dated the last of the three 1829. Recent editors have made the error complete by dating them all 1829. Accordingly, in the autumn of 1886, when engaged in arranging the Letters for my new edition, I was perplexed by this confusion of dates, and could discover no internal evidence in the Letters themselves to resolve my doubts. A recent editor of Lamb's Correspondence had confidently announced that the Collection of Likenesses of British Bards was a certain work called *Effigies Poeticæ*, being a set of portraits of distinguished English Poets, with short notices of their lives and works, which was not in fact issued till the year 1824. This work (the letterpress of which, issued anonymously, was by Barry Cornwall) only included poets already deceased, and therefore did not contain any portrait or notice of Joseph Cottle. When I had given up hope of finding any clue to the mystery, the actual volume indicated by Lamb came to light. It proved to be a copy of Byron's *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, profusely illustrated with engravings and drawings of the various poets and other literary characters occurring in the famous satire. My attention was called to the copy by its containing, as its solitary water-colour drawing, a hitherto unknown portrait of Charles Lamb, by Mr. Joseph, A.R.A.; but on examining the book further, I found that it contained also a pencil drawing of Joseph Cottle, evidently copied from a miniature. The date of the compilation, as given on a special title-page, was 1819, and the person by whom it was compiled, one William Evans. By inquiring from the latest possessor of the volume, I discovered that this Mr. Evans was Lamb's old friend of that name, a colleague in the India House, to whom Lamb owed his first introduction to Talfourd. Here then was beyond doubt the "particular friend" who was making a selection of the "Likenesses of Living Bards." That Lamb was perfectly well aware of the use Mr. Evans proposed to make of the portraits in question we cannot doubt; and we can imagine with what characteristic equanimity he was allowing his own portrait to appear in illustration of lines by Byron quite as scornful as those in which poor Cottle was described. As Joseph Cottle, however, might not have received the intelli-

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gence with the same philosophic calm, Lamb did not think it necessary to inform his old friend of the precise destination of his portrait. Since I made known these facts in the columns of the *Athenæum*, Mr. Evans's volume has passed into the keeping of the British Museum.

LETTER CXCVIII (p. 38).—*A daughter of Joseph's, R.A.* The name of Mr. Joseph's daughter is appended to several of the drawings in Mr. Evans's volume, but by some oversight not to the likeness of Joseph Cottle, which was a copy from a miniature by Branwhite of Bristol. Mr. Joseph was an associate only of the Royal Academy. He never attained the full rank of R.A.

*Your better favour, the "Messiah."* "In consequence of this application," Cottle tells us, referring to the preceding letter of Lamb's, "I sent C. Lamb a portrait by Branwhite, and enclosed for his acceptance the second part of my *Messiah*." Cottle had published the first part of this Epic, "in twenty-four books," four years earlier. Lamb, as usual, hits with unerring skill one of the few lines in the dreary waste of commonplace that have some felicity of diction. Cottle had ruined the effect of the musical couplet—

"The willowy brook was there, but that sweet sound—  
When to be heard again on earthly ground?"

by adding the feeble lines—

"(While sorrow gave th' involuntary tear),  
Had ceased to vibrate on our listening ear."

LETTER CXCIX (p. 40).—Cottle's *Fall of Cambria*, in twenty-four books, was published in 1811.

*Anything you should write against Lord Byron.* Cottle had evidently informed Lamb of his "Expostulatory Epistle to Lord Byron"—composed and published after the publication of the first two cantos of *Don Juan*. Of this effusion, in rhymed couplets, the following few lines may be given as a fair sample:—

"Sunk, but not lost, from dreams of death arise!  
No longer tempt the patience of the skies!"

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Confess, with tears of blood, to frowning Heaven  
The foul perversion of *His* talents given !  
Retrace thy footsteps ! Ere the wish be vain  
Bring back the erring thousands in thy train !  
Let none, at death, despairing charge on thee  
Their blasted peace, in shuddering agony !  
Their prop, their heart's last solace, rent away  
That one *long night* might quench their *Perfect Day*."

LETTER CC (p. 41).—Talfourd assigned this note to the year 1829, but it certainly belongs to the year 1819, for Coleridge's sonnet referred to, "Fancy in Nubibus: or the Poet in the Clouds," was first printed in *Blackwood's Magazine* in November 1819, and this copy was evidently sent to Lamb in manuscript and before publication. For the better enjoyment of this humorous letter I make no apology for reprinting the poem :—

"O ! it is pleasant, with a heart at ease,  
Just after sunset, or by moonlight skies,  
To make the shifting clouds be what you please,  
Or let the easily persuaded eyes  
Own each quaint likeness issuing from the mould  
Of a friend's fancy ; or with head bent low  
And cheek aslant see rivers flow of gold  
'Twixt crimson banks ; and then a traveller, go  
From mount to mount through Cloudland, gorgeous land !  
Or, listening to the tide, with closed sight,  
Be that blind bard, who on the Chian strand,  
By those deep sounds possessed with inward light,  
Beheld the *Iliad* and the *Odyssee*  
Rise to the swelling of the voiceful sea."

LETTER CCI (p. 42).—William Wordsworth, the third son of the poet, had just come to the school of the Charter House in London, and on this Wednesday half-holiday the Lambs had asked him to dinner.

*A certain preface about imagination.* The allusion is to Wordsworth's own lines in "The Leech-Gatherer," cited by him in the Preface to the 1815 edition of his *Poems* :—

"Like a sea-beast crawled forth, that on a shelf  
Of rock or sand reposes, there to sun itself."



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It is perhaps impertinent to point out the exquisite allusion to the poet having "ever been on Westminster Bridge."

LETTER CCII (p. 45).—*Some of Lloyd's lines on you.* The "Stanzas addressed to \* \* \*," in Lloyd's *Desultory Thoughts in London*, written this year.

*Capel Lofft's.* A sonnet dated from Manchester and signed C. L. had just appeared in a newspaper.

*Your marine sonnet* was Coleridge's sonnet, "Fancy in Nubibus—a sonnet composed on the sea-coast," which appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine* of November 1819. In the same number there is a note on Sir Thomas Browne by Coleridge, but not contributed by him. It is signed G. J.

LETTER CCIII (p. 47).—I have included this fragment of a letter because all Lamb's opinions of contemporary poetry are worth preserving. Wordsworth's "Duddon" sonnets had been published this year, and with them "Dion," "Artegal and Elidure," "The Pass of Kirkstone," "The Longest Day," and others.

LETTERS CCV and CCVI (p. 49).—These letters were first printed in Mrs. Mathews's Memoir of her Husband in 1839 (vol. iii. p. 192). As they imply, Charles and Mary Lamb had been invited to meet Charles Mathews, the elder, and his wife at the Gillmans. Mrs. Mathews gives an account of the dinner, from which the following sketch of Lamb's outward man is worth preserving:—"Mr. Lamb's first approach was not prepossessing. His figure was small and mean; and no man certainly was ever less beholden to his tailor. His 'bran' new suit of black cloth (in which he affected several times during the day to take great pride, and to cherish as a novelty that he had long looked for and wanted) was drolly contrasted with his very rusty silk stockings, shown from his knees, and his much too large *thick* shoes without polish. His shirt rejoiced in a wide ill-plaited frill, and his very small, tight, white neckcloth was hemmed to a fine point at the ends that formed part of the little bow. His hair was black and sleek, but not formal, and his face the gravest I ever saw, but indicating great intellect, and resembling very much the portraits of King Charles I. Mr. Coleridge was very anxious about his *pet* Lamb's first impression upon my husband, which I believe

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his friend saw ; and guessing that he had been extolled, he mischievously resolved to thwart his panegyrist, disappoint the strangers, and altogether to upset the suspected plan of showing him off."

*Master Mathew*, a character in Ben Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour*.

LETTER CCVII (p. 50).—Mr. Collier had published in 1820 his "Poetical Decameron : or, Ten Conversations on English Poets and Poetry, particularly of the reigns of Elizabeth and James I." ; and this is the work now acknowledged by Lamb. The discoveries about *Twelfth Night* were only as to the origin of the plot being found in a novel by Barnaby Rich. The reference to the comedy and its performance at the Temple in Manningham's *Diary*, had not as yet been discovered by Mr. Collier. Lamb's allusion to *Osrades* is very curious. I feel no doubt that this is what he wrote in the letter, and that it was his imperfect recollection of the actual name, Rosader, the character corresponding to Shakspeare's Orlando in Lodge's *Rosalind*, the novel on which Shakspeare built his *As You Like It*. The speech of Rosader in addressing the Duke and company in the forest is one of those cited by Mr. Collier (vol. ii. p. 174). It begins, "Whatsoever thou be that art maister of these lustie squires, I salute thee as graciously as a man in extreme distresse may : knowe that I and a fellow friend of mine are here famished in the forrest for want of food : perish we must, unless relieved by thy favours."

*The character of the Ass*. A sixteenth-century tract entitled "The Nobleness of the Ass," discussed by Mr. Collier's three "Friends in Council," is here referred to (i. 168). Lamb contributed a short notice of it to his friend Hone's *Every-Day Book*. See *Mrs. Leicester's School*, etc.

*The line you cannot appropriate*. The line was—

"And weep the more because I weep in vain" ;

from Gray's sonnet on the death of his friend West.

*You will find last poem but one*. Morton, one of the speakers in Mr. Collier's *Decameron*, instances Sir P. Sidney and an epitaph written on him by Sir Walter Raleigh, in which, according to Harrington, he is called "The Scipio and the Petrarke of our time."

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LETTER CCVIII (p. 51).—The “beautiful lines” here referred to were a copy of verses published in the *London Magazine* for August 1821, signed “Olen.” They were entitled “Epistle to Elia : suggested by his Essay ‘Molle atque facetum’ on New Year’s Eve.” Lamb’s essay had appeared in the number of the Magazine for the preceding January. See *Essays of Elia*. The poem was a grave protest against the despondent and sceptical tone of Lamb’s speculations on a future state of being. It is too long to give in its entirety, extending to nearly two hundred lines, but an extract may be cited in proof of the eloquent earnestness of the remonstrance. Speaking of the vagueness of Lamb’s imaginings of the life to come, the writer goes on :—

“No ! never dream it :

If thou but think this error, O redeem it.  
The same that shadowed the green, leafy dells,  
And gave them music sweeter than *thy bells*,  
Has furnished out thy Heaven by the sweet name  
Of *Paradise*. And thou, too, art the same :  
The soul that revelled in thy Burton’s page  
Shall be alive with thee ; the bard and sage  
Thou lovedst here, they wait but thy arrival ;  
Thy death shall be a sleep, a self-survival.  
Yea, thou shalt stand in pause when thou hast set  
Thy foot upon heaven’s threshold, and beget  
Effaced remembrances of forms and times,  
Greetings and partings in these earthly climes :  
And there shall come a rush upon thy brain  
Of recollected voices, a sweet pain  
Of sudden recognition ; gentle stealings  
Of wakened memory—deep, voluptuous feelings,  
Pressures and kisses, that shall make thee start  
At thy own consciousness, and own, *Thou art*.”

Lamb, it will be seen, conjectured that the lines might be by James Montgomery. They were by the late Sir Charles Elton, of Clevedon Court, a frequent contributor at that time to the *London Magazine*, and were included by him in a volume, *Boyhood, and other Poems*, published in 1835.

This letter is doubly interesting, as revealing the origin of Lamb’s famous signature. There is no sufficient reason for supposing the explanation fictitious ; and Mr. Lowell’s con-

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ture that Lamb owed it to the *Epistolæ Ho-Elianæ* of James Howell cannot seriously be entertained.

LETTER CCIX (p. 53).—The first of a series of letters to Cowden Clarke, which Mrs. Cowden Clarke most kindly placed at my disposal. It need hardly be explained that Mrs. Clarke was a daughter of Vincent Novello. Lamb was living just now in country lodgings at Dalston, and was not within easy reach of Leigh Hunt at Hampstead.

LETTER CCX (p. 55).—The first sketch of the famous "Roast Pig" Essay, which appeared in the *London Magazine* of the following September.

LETTER CCXI (p. 57).—*Poor John's loss.* Lamb's elder brother, John, had died in November of the previous year. Captain Burney died in the same month.

*The foul enchanter* — "letters four do form his name." The quotation is from Coleridge's poem, "Fire, Famine, and Slaughter," where it is a paraphrase for Pitt. Here it is certainly intended for Joseph Hume, who had already established his fame as an Economical Reformer, and who the year before had cut down the salaries of the Distributors of Stamps, which directly affected Wordsworth.

*Busirane* is the name of an enchanter in the *Fairy Queen*. Hume was engaged in attacking the salaries, pensions, and superannuation allowances of the public service generally.

*Milton hangs over my fireside.* The portrait of Milton had come into Lamb's possession through the death of his brother John.

*My meeting with Dodd.* See the Essay on "Some of the Old Actors," then just printed in the *London*. The fortunes of this magazine were already waning.

LETTER CCXII (p. 61).—*The Numberer of the People.* Mr. Rickman first organised the machinery for taking the decennial census.

LETTER CCXIV (p. 61).—John Clare (1793-1864), the son of an agricultural labourer in Northamptonshire. He had published, through Taylor and Hessey, *Poems, descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery*; and later in the same year (1821), *The Village Minstrel, and other Poems*. These are the volumes, doubtless,

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which are acknowledged in this letter. Clare's verse appeared from time to time in the *London Magazine*, through which association he and Lamb had become acquainted.

The "sonnet" in the *London* for August referred to by Lamb was unsigned.

*Since I saw you I have been in France.* Charles and Mary Lamb left London in the middle of June 1822 for a holiday in Paris. They were for a while the guests of James Kenney, the dramatist, at Versailles. From an entry in Crabb Robinson's *Diary* we learn that they travelled in company with a French gentleman, and a nurse for Miss Lamb, in readiness for any return of her frequent illness. Charles Lamb was absent a month, but Mary Lamb remained at the Kennes some time longer, returning to England on the 10th of September. See subsequent letters to Mrs. Kenney and to Barron Field.

LETTER CCXV (p. 63).—*Bernard Barton.* This is the earliest of the interesting series of letters to the Quaker poet, of Woodbridge, in Suffolk. Mr. Barton was clerk in the Bank of the Messrs. Alexander in that town. He was a contributor to the *London Magazine*, and Lamb had first met him at the hospitable table of the publishers, Messrs. Taylor and Hessey, who were in the habit of gathering their staff together at periodical dinners. On one of these occasions Lamb had spoken playfully of the inconsistency of a member of the Society of Friends writing poetry, and out of a friendly remonstrance in reply there arose a correspondence, long carried on with the greatest satisfaction to both. For fuller information about Mr. Barton, I would refer to the short biography of him prefixed to a selection of his poems published after his death in 1849. The memoir, a model in style and feeling of what such a thing should be, is by the late Edward FitzGerald, who married Mr. Barton's only daughter and child. "Napoleon," with other poems, was the third volume of verse published by Mr. Barton. It had just before appeared. The sonnet here quoted is of course Lamb's own.

LETTER CCXVI (p. 65).—This letter has never been printed. The original is in the possession of my friend, Mr. W. J. Jefferson of Folkestone, whose mother was the

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*Sophy* of the letter. Mary Lamb had apparently been asked to bring home a stray waistcoat of Crabb Robinson's that he had left behind him in Paris. The allusions to the cow and the canary bird are to certain disturbers of Lamb's sleep that existed at his Dalston lodgings. Little *Sophy*, a daughter of the Kennys, was one of twin-sisters; Lamb called her his "little wife." The allusion to the sixpence is surely to the old nursery rhyme :—

" I love a sixpence, pretty, pretty sixpence,  
I love a sixpence dearer than my life—"

LETTER CCXVII (p. 67).—The following independent account of the visit to Talma was supplied to me by the late Mr. Edward FitzGerald :—"Lamb was staying at Paris with Kenney, when Talma invited them, with Howard Payne, to come and see an original picture of Shakspeare on an old pair of bellows which he had purchased for a thousand francs, and which proved to be a well-known imposture, of which the great tragedian had recently become the victim. After admiring his supposed acquisition, the party announced their intention of seeing him that evening in the play of *Regulus*, and invited him to sup with them afterwards, to which he assented. Lamb, however, could not at all enter into the spirit of French acting, and in his general distaste made no exception in favour of his intended guest. This, however, did not prevent their mutual and high relish of each other's character and conversation, nor was any allusion made to the performance, till, on rising to go, Talma inquired 'how he liked it?' Lamb shook his head and smiled. 'Ah!' said Talma, 'I was not very happy to-night; you must see me in *Sylla*.'—"Incidit in Scyllam," said Lamb, 'qui vult vitare Charybdim.'—"Ah! you are a rogue—a great rogue," said Talma, shaking him cordially by the hand as they parted." The Shakspeare portrait imposture is exposed in an article in *Chambers's Journal* of 27th September 1856, "The Apocryphal in Portraiture."

Lamb's description of Paris in this letter may well be supplemented by a few notes written for his sister's guidance after his own return to England. He advises her to walk along the "Borough-side of the Seine," where she would find

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a mile and a half of printshops and bookstalls. "Then there is a place where the Paris people put all their dead people, and bring them flowers and dolls and gingerbread-nuts and sonnets and such trifles; and that is all, I think, worth seeing as sights, except that the streets and shops of Paris are themselves the best sight."

LETTER CCXVIII (p. 69).—*Your letter and poem.* The poem sent was Bernard Barton's "Verses on the Death of Percy Bysshe Shelley," just issued in pamphlet shape. Shelley had perished on the 8th of July in this year. The line taken in the poem was naturally one of solemn lamentation over the unhappy principles of the late poet.

LETTER CCXIX (p. 71).—*Poor Godwin.* "The pecuniary troubles already mentioned assumed no serious form till the year 1821, nor did any real crisis arrive till the year 1822. The title to the proprietorship of the house in Skinner Street, of which Godwin held a long lease, was disputed, and an action for ejectment was brought against him. After considerable litigation the suit was finally decided adversely to Godwin's interests. The results were an enforced move from Skinner Street, a claim for arrears of rent, which was wholly unlooked for, the disorganisation of the whole of the business which had been carried on with considerable and increasing success, and finally Godwin became bankrupt."—(Kegan Paul's *William Godwin, his Friends and Contemporaries.*)

LETTER CCXXI (p. 72).—The first of a short series of letters to John Howard Payne, the American actor and playwright. These letters appeared first, with comments by Mr. R. S. Chilton, in the *Century Magazine* for October 1882. To Mr. Chilton and the Editor I am indebted for their kind permission to use them. Mr. Payne lived much in Paris, where presumably Lamb made his acquaintance during his recent visit. Payne had a career of great poverty and struggle, but later in life was made United States Consul at Tunis, where he died in 1852. Among his many dramas was *Clari, the Maid of Milan*, in which occurs the famous "Home, sweet Home," set by Bishop. Lamb's letters to him deal chiefly with some of Payne's dramas then being

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performed in London. The "little wife" at Versailles in the following letter is the Sophy Kenney of a preceding letter to Mrs. Kenney.

LETTER CCXXIII (p. 76).—The proposed Dedication was for the first collected edition of the *Elia Essays*, published early in the following year. It was, in accordance with Lamb's "second thoughts" here explained, not ultimately used. The "sort of Preface" which appeared in the forthcoming number was the "Character of the late Elia," by a Friend.

LETTER CCXXIV (p. 78).—Mr. Walter Wilson, an early friend of Lamb's, was engaged upon a Life of De Foe, and had written to Lamb for guidance. Wilson's *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Daniel De Foe* appeared in 1829. Lamb supplied to the work an "Estimate of De Foe's Secondary Novels," which is, in fact, an expanded version of the criticism contained in this letter. See *Mrs. Leicester's School*, etc.

LETTER CCXXVI (p. 82).—This letter was written to Miss Wordsworth, then on a visit to her brother, the Master of Trinity, at Cambridge.

*My new year's speculations.* The memorable Essay on "New Year's Eve." Whether the reference to the author of the *Pleasures of Hope* means that Lamb now believed the lines signed "Olen" to have been by the poet Campbell, is uncertain. Possibly it is only a playful allusion to his having himself *not* indulged in these "Pleasures" in the essay in question.

*Mrs. Paris, our Cambridge friend.* Mrs. Paris, mother of the eminent physician of that name, was the sister of Lamb's friend Ayrton. It was at her house that the Lambs first made the acquaintance of Emma Isola.

LETTER CCXXVII (p. 85).—The first of a series of letters to Mr. John Bates Dibdin, now for the first time printed. Mr. Dibdin was born in 1798, and died on May 11, 1828. He was the eldest son of Charles Dibdin the Younger, author of *Young Arthur*, and of innumerable plays, poems, songs, etc., and a grandson of Charles Dibdin, the nautical song-writer and composer. John Bates Dibdin held a clerkship in the office of Messrs. Railton, Rankin, and Co., Merchants, in the Old Jewry. He for several years edited the *European Magazine*.



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He went to Madeira in the hope of re-establishing his health, but shortly after his return to England died of consumption. I am indebted for this information to his nephew, Mr. Robert W. Dibdin, who has most kindly placed the original letters in his possession at my disposal. To him I am further obliged for the following interesting account of Lamb's introduction to his uncle. The account is mainly in the words of a sister of John Bates Dibdin who survived him till quite recently. It fully explains the allusions in the present letter. Miss Dibdin (Mrs. Tonna), after mentioning that she had visited Lamb at Islington, writes :—"My brother, who took me there, had become very intimate with him, after a previously somewhat long acquaintance. He was himself engaged in the city, and had constant occasion to conduct the giving or taking of cheques, as it might be, at the India House. There he always selected the 'little clever man' in preference to the other clerks. At that time the *Elia Essays* were appearing in print. No one had the slightest conception who 'Elia' was. He was talked of everywhere, and everybody was trying to find him out, but without success. At last, from the style and manner of conveying his ideas and opinions on different subjects, my brother began to suspect that Lamb was the individual so widely sought for, and wrote some lines to him, anonymously, sending them by post to his residence, with the hope of sifting him on the subject. Although Lamb could not *know* who sent him the lines, yet he looked very hard at the writer of them the next time they met, when he walked up, as usual, to Lamb's desk in the most unconcerned manner, to transact the necessary business. Shortly after, when they were again in conversation, something dropped from Lamb's lips which convinced his hearer, beyond a doubt, that his suspicions were correct. He therefore wrote some more lines (anonymously, as before), beginning—

‘I've found thee out, O Elia !’

and sent them to Colebrook Row. The consequence was that at their next meeting Lamb produced the lines, and after much laughing, confessed himself to be *Elia*. This led to a warm friendship between them."

The present letter was evidently written by Lamb on the

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occasion of this mutual disclosure. Mr. Dibdin had signed his poetic appeals to Elia with only the letter "D." Lamb's assumption that his new friend's Christian name was Timothy is, of course, purely gratuitous.

LETTER CCXXVIII (p. 86).—Mr. Bruton was a farmer in Hertfordshire, and a distant connection by marriage of Lamb. See letter of Lamb to Manning, May 1819, "How are my cousins, the Gladmans of Wheathamstead, and farmer Bruton? Mrs. Bruton is a glorious woman." These presents of pig were among the first-fruits of Lamb's famous essay in the *London* of September 1822.

LETTER CCXXIX (p. 88).—"While Mr. Barton's poetical labours affected his health, the first success of them for a time disconcerted him with his clerkship; though neither injured health, nor hope deferred, ever overshadowed his social good-humour, or discovered themselves in repining: nay, he even thought of quitting the bank and Woodbridge altogether, and trusting to his pen for subsistence; an unwise scheme in all men, most unwise in one who had so little authorly tact as himself. From this, however, he was fortunately diverted by all the friends to whom he communicated his design" (*Memoir*, by Edward FitzGerald).

LETTER CCXXXI (p. 92).—*Sewell*. W. Sewell's *History of the Quakers*, 1725.

*Abbeypony History*. Sara Coleridge published in 1822 a translation of Martin Dobrizhoffer's Latin *Account of the Abipones*, a performance, in her father's judgment, "unsurpassed for pure mother English by anything I have read for a long time."

*Mr. Mitford's place*. The Rev. John Mitford, Rector of Benhall, Suffolk, poet and editor of poets, a neighbour and intimate friend of Bernard Barton.

LETTER CCXXXIII (p. 96).—*An edition of "Roxana."* In the Prologue that Lamb wrote to Godwin's play of *Faulkener* in 1807, he alluded to the circumstance of Godwin being indebted to De Foe's *Roxana*. See *Mrs. Leicester's School*, etc., and Kegan Paul's *Life of Godwin*, ii. 162.

*Who wrote "Quarl."* The authorship of *Philip Quarl* is still, I believe, undetermined.

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LETTER CCXXXIV (p. 98).—"A Letter to an Old Gentleman whose education had been neglected." This *jeu d'esprit* of Lamb's was ultimately published in the *London Magazine* of January 1825. See *Mrs. Leicester's School*, etc.

*I took up Scott.* *Critical Essays on the English Poets*, by John Scott, the Quaker poet of Amwell.

*I dined in Parnassus.* An account of this dinner is given by Thomas Moore in his *Journals*. Moore gives April 4 as the date of the dinner, so Lamb's date is one of his not uncommon slips. Moore writes:—"Dined at Monkhouse's, a gentleman I had never seen before, on Wordsworth's invitation, who lives there when he comes to town. A singular party—Coleridge, Wordsworth and wife, Rogers, Charles Lamb (the hero at present of the *London Magazine*), and his sister (the poor woman who went mad with him in the Diligence on the way to Paris), and a Mr. Robinson, one of the *minora sidera* of the constellation of the Lakes. . . . Charles Lamb, a clever fellow certainly, but full of villainous and abortive puns, which he miscarries of every minute" (Moore's *Journals*, iv. 51).

LETTER CCXXXV (p. 100).—*My little book.* The first series of *Elia* (1823).

*The Quaker incident.* See Essay on "Imperfect Sympathies" (*Elia*).

*The discovery of roasting pigs.* See also notes on this essay in my edition of *Elia*.

*His friend Naylor.* James Naylor, one of the most fanatical of the disciples of George Fox; shamefully persecuted by order of the Parliament in 1656.

*How did you like Hartley's sonnets?* Hartley Coleridge had published in the *London Magazine* for February his earliest sonnets, those addressed to his friend Robert Jameson. The first of these, here referred to, is the one beginning—

"When we were idlers with the loitering rills."

See Hartley Coleridge's *Poems*, i. 5.

*I borrowed a seal of a friend.* The friend was Barron Field. The letter to the "great man" was to Walter Scott, on occasion of the appeal in behalf of Godwin.

## LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

LETTER CCXXXVIII (p. 106).—*Your precious present.* A miniature of Pope, which Procter had sent him.

*I have dined with T. Moore.* See preceding letter, No. CCXXXIV, p. 100.

LETTER CCXXXIX (p. 108).—Written to Miss Hutchinson (Mrs. Wordsworth's sister), who was taking charge of an invalid relative, Mrs. Monkhouse, at Ramsgate. Lamb's grave accusations against his sister's penmanship are merely playful. Note the delightful strokes of humour in this and the following letter—"‘Time’ (as was said of one of us) ‘toils after us in vain.’" Johnson's line on Shakspeare—"Panting Time toiled after him in vain."

*Mr. Gruvellegan* would appear to be Lamb's facetious attempt to reproduce the name of Edward Quillinan, afterwards Wordsworth's son-in-law. Lee Priory was the seat of Sir S. E. Brydges, the father of Quillinan's first wife.

LETTER CCXL (p. 110).—*My letter to the old gentleman.* The parody on De Quincey's *Letters to a Young Man whose Education has been Neglected*. See previous letter to Barton of 5th March.

*I miss Janus.* "Janus Weathercock," the now notorious Thomas Griffiths Wainewright (the forger and poisoner), had been on the regular staff of the *London Magazine*.

LETTER CCXLIII (p. 114).—This fragment of a letter to Charles Lloyd was first printed in the volume of Barton's Letters and Poems already referred to. Lamb's letter was written to Lloyd on occasion of receiving from him a fresh volume of his poetry: *Poems*, by Charles Lloyd: London, 1823. Among them are "Lines, written Feb. 6, 1822, on the death of Mary Lloyd, Mother of the Author"; "Stanzas on the Death of Mary Braithwaite, the third Sister of the Author"; and others.

LETTER CCXLIV (p. 115).—*I abused Hastings.* The Elia Essay "The Old Margate Hoy" was written during Lamb's sojourn at Hastings, and published in the *London Magazine* of this very month, July 1823. In the course of that essay he

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had, as he says, "abused Hastings." Readers of *Elia* will remember the passage about "this detestable Cinque Port." But, as will be seen, Lamb came to change his opinion of its merits. The small country church, here described, is the little church of Hollington, a mile or two out of Hastings. It evidently inspired Lamb's fancy in a wonderful degree. He recurs to the subject in more than one letter of this period.

*Southey has attacked "Elia."* See chap. vii. of my *Memoir of Lamb*. Southey's article appeared in the *Quarterly* for January 1823. The *Elia* Essay "On Witches and other Night Fears" was the one specially chosen by Southey to point his moral.

LETTER CCXLVI (p. 117).—*Your kind sonnet*. What sonnet this could have been I do not know. Barton had published a sonnet to *Elia* in the *London* of the previous February, beginning—

"Delightful author! unto whom I owe  
Moments and moods of fancy and of feeling."

Barton included it in his volume *Poetic Vigils* in 1824. It embodies some discriminating criticism.

*Mr. Cary, the Dante-man*. The first mention in these letters of the Rev. H. F. Cary, the translator of Dante, and a frequent contributor to the *London Magazine*. He had a residence at the British Museum as Assistant-Keeper of Printed Books.

LETTER CCXLVII (p. 119).—Hood was at this time on a visit to Hastings for his health. Lamb, who had himself been there lately, writes to instruct his friend as to seeing the lions, among which the little church at Hollington again appears. The reference to Standgate Street is simply a practical joke. There is no such street in Hastings, and though great changes have been made in the nomenclature of streets and roads in that town, the oldest inhabitant can recall no such name.

"*He sang in meads.*" Quoted incorrectly from Landor's *Gebir*, Book iv.—

"In smiling meads how sweet the brook's repose  
To the rough ocean, and red restless sands."

*Tom Woodgate* was a boatman at Hastings, under whose care

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Hood often enjoyed a sail. See the "Literary Reminiscences" in *Hood's Own*. "Old Lignum Janua" in the opening of this letter would appear to be a Latin alternative for him.

LETTER CCXLIX (p. 122).—Your "*Stanzas on Bloomfield*." This poem had been sent to Lamb on its appearance in the columns of a local paper, and when it was next printed in Barton's *Poetic Vigils* (1824) it was with certain modifications. That word "Horkey," for instance, which is the Suffolk name for the Harvest Supper, had disappeared (probably in deference to Lamb's objections), and the stanza in which it occurred was recast so as to admit of "Harvest-Home" instead.

*How happily you have brought in his subjects.—*

"Circling the *Old Oak Table* round,  
Whose moral worth thy measure owns,  
Heroes and heroines yet are found  
Like *Abner and the Widow Jones*.  
There *Gilbert Meldrum's* sterner tones  
In virtue's cause are bold and free,  
And ev'n the patient sufferer's moans  
In pain and sorrow plead for thee."

*I meditate a letter to S. in the "London."* The famous letter to Southey appeared in the following month.

LETTER CCLII (p. 125).—Mr. Dibdin had sent Lamb a sucking pig (yet another result of the memorable essay), and with it a miniature semblance of a pig worked in satin and straw.

*Sir!—as I say to Southey.* A reference to the solemn and formal opening of his letter to Southey in the current number of the *London Magazine*.

LETTER CCLIII (p. 127).—*The kindness of your note.* Southey's letter is published by me for the first time in the notes to "Lamb's Letter to Southey in the *London Magazine*," in a previous volume of this edition. The "Confessions of a Drunkard" was a paper of Lamb's contributed some years before to a compilation by Basil Montagu, called "Some Enquiries into the Effects of Fermented Liquors. By a Water Drinker." In the *Quarterly* for April 1822 appeared an article

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on Dr. Reid's treatise on "Hypochondriasis and other Nervous Affections." These "Confessions of a Drunkard" were there referred to as "a fearful picture of the consequences of intemperance," which the reviewer went on to say "we have reason to know is a true tale."

LETTER CCLIV (p. 128).—*Thou wilt see a funny passage.* See the *Elia* Essay "Amicus Redivivus," and my notes thereupon.

LETTER CCLVI (p. 132).—Mr. W. Harrison Ainsworth, the future novelist, is here addressed. He must have lent Lamb the works of William Warner, the Elizabethan poet, author of *Albion's England*. The only English version of Goethe's *Faust* then accessible was Hayward's.

Ainsworth, a youth of eighteen, was as yet residing at Manchester, where his father was a solicitor. He came up to London in the following year.

## CHAPTER V

1824—1827

LETTER CCLVIII (p. 136).—Thurtell, the notorious murderer of Mr. William Weare, "who lived in Lyon's Inn," was executed at Hertford on this day. It will be remembered that at his trial one of the witnesses enunciated the famous definition of Respectability. See Carlyle's Works, *passim*.

LETTER CCLIX (p. 138).—*Your friend Taylor.* The Rev. C. B. Taylor, curate of Hadleigh, Suffolk, author of various religious stories, now forgotten.

*Your account of my black-balling.* It had been proposed to admit *Elia* for circulation in a Book Club in Woodbridge, to which Barton and other Friends belonged, with the result here mentioned.

"*I have been merry once or twice ere now.*"

—Master Silence, in *Henry IV.* Part II.

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*Coleridge's Book. Aids to Reflection*, published in 1825. It consists largely, as will be remembered, of passages from Leighton's writings with Coleridge's comments.

*The decision against Hunt. The Liberal: Verse and Prose from the South*, edited by Leigh Hunt in Italy, contained in its opening number Byron's "Vision of Judgment." The Constitutional Association filed a criminal information in the King's Bench for libel against John Hunt, the publisher. The case came on January 15, 1824, and the defendant was ultimately fined £100, and required to give security for good behaviour for five years.

LETTER CCLX (p. 141).—"Inesilla, or the Tempter," a story by one of the brothers Ollier, who had published Lamb's collected works in 1818.

LETTER CCLXI (p. 142).—"Poetic Vigils." A volume of verse by Bernard Barton, then in preparation. The motto finally chosen for the title-page was a stanza of Henry Vaughan, the Silurist—

"Dear night ! this world's defeat."

LETTER CCLXII (p. 144).—In 1824, Mr. FitzGerald tells us, Barton "received a handsome addition to his income from another quarter. A few members of his Society, including some of the wealthier of his own family, raised £1200 among them for his benefit. . . . It seems that he felt some delicacy at first in accepting the munificent testimony which his own people offered to his talents." Lamb's letter is in reply to one from Barton, consulting him on this matter. Lamb, it will be seen, overstates the amount contributed.

LETTER CCLXIV (p. 148).—This interesting letter is now for the first time printed correctly, from the original in the possession of Mr. B. McGeorge of Glasgow, who kindly placed it at my disposal. The letter arose out of the following circumstances. James Montgomery, the poet, had this year edited a volume of original prose and verse, setting forth the wrongs and sufferings of the little chimney-sweepers, for whose relief a Society had been for some time labouring. The volume was entitled, *The Chimney-Sweeper's Friend*, and



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*Climbing-Boy's Album.* Lamb had been invited to contribute a poem, but not finding time or inspiration, sent instead Blake's verses, "The Chimney-Sweeper," then all but unknown to the ordinary reader of poetry. They appeared in Montgomery's volume with this heading, "Communicated by Mr. Charles Lamb from a very rare and curious little work," the very rare work being Blake's *Songs of Innocence*. Bernard Barton, himself a contributor to Montgomery's *Album*, had there discovered these verses of Blake's, and had written to Lamb to ask questions concerning the writer of them. "Is Blake a real name?" was evidently his wonder. It will be seen that even Lamb did not know Blake's Christian name.

*Your recent acquisitions of the Picture and the Letter.* Barton had received from some relatives at Carlisle a portrait of his father, which had greatly pleased him. Barton describes it in a letter to his friend Taylor, included in Mr. FitzGerald's *Memoir*. The picture of Lamb's father, here referred to, has been engraved in Mr. Procter's *Memoir of Lamb*.

*His poems have been sold hitherto only in Manuscript.* Lamb obviously means that the *Songs of Innocence* were not printed, but etched in writing-hand on the same plates as the drawings that illustrate them. As usual, Lamb was one of the first to recognise genius where the world in general only saw insanity.

*The Society with the affected name.* "The Society for Ameliorating the Condition of Infant Chimney-Sweepers" is the name of one Society, mentioned in Montgomery's book, having this philanthropic object.

*With the exception of an Epilogue.* This was an epilogue to Shakspeare's *Richard II.*, performed by the family of Lamb's friend, Barron Field. By the kindness of the late Miss M. L. Field of Hastings, I possess a copy of this epilogue, which will be found in its place, printed (I believe) for the first time, in *Mrs. Leicester's School*, etc. See note in that volume.

*So we have lost another Poet.* Byron had died at Missolonghi on the 19th of April.

LETTER CCLXV (p. 151).—*Your very pretty volume. Poetic Vigils*, now at last published (1824).

*You have done Woolman injustice.* In some lines headed

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"A Memorial of John Woolman, a Minister of the Gospel among the Quakers," written in anapæstic verse.

*The piece on Nayler.* "A Memorial of James Nayler, the Reproach and Glory of Quakerism."

LETTER CCLXVI (p. 152).—*Young Arthur.* A story in verse by Mr. Dibdin's father, Charles Dibdin the Younger. Many of the interspersed lyrics are thoroughly graceful and musical.

*Just returned from Botany Bay.* Barron Field had this year resigned his post of Judge of the Supreme Court at Sydney, and returned to England.

LETTER CCLXVII (p. 153).—Mr. Cary had sent Lamb his translation of the *Birds* of Aristophanes.

LETTER CCLXVIII (p. 153).—*On getting a house over your head.* "Now, too, after having long lived in a house that was just big enough to eat and sleep in, while he was obliged to board with the ladies of a Quaker School over the way, he obtained a convenient house of his own, where he got his pictures and books about him" (FitzGerald's *Memoir*).

*The album shall be attended to.* The album of Lucy Barton, to which the poem given in the succeeding letter was contributed.

*The "Prometheus," unbound.* Mr. Mitford, Barton's neighbour and friend, had written to a local bookseller for a copy of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, and after some delay had received the answer that he was sorry the work was not to be obtained "in sheets."

*A sonnet conceived and expressed with a witty delicacy.* Shelley's lines hardly constitute a sonnet. Lamb refers to his "Lines to a Reviewer," beginning—

"Alas! good friend, what profit can you see  
In hating such a hateless thing as me?  
There is no sport in hate where all the rage  
Is on one side."

*A futile effort in the next Number.* The beautiful Essay, "Blakesmoor in Hertfordshire," was in the *London Magazine* for September 1824.

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LETTER CCLXIX (p. 155).—These verses were headed, when sent in this letter, "In the Album of *Hannah Barton*." Lamb explains why he had assumed that Christian name.

LETTER CCLXXI (p. 159).—Mr. Procter (Barry Cornwall) was married to Miss Anne Skepper, the step-daughter of Basil Montagu, in October 1824.

LETTER CCLXXII (p. 161).—Mr. Monkhouse, a cousin of Mrs. Wordsworth's, was threatened with consumption, and had been ordered by his physicians to winter in Devonshire. Miss Hutchinson was staying at Torquay with the Monkhouses. He died early in the following year.

LETTER CCLXXIII (p. 163).—One of Mr. Mitford's vases, which were actually made in China and sent home, is now, through the friendly offices of Mr. John Loder of Woodbridge, in the Editor's possession.

*Fauntleroy*, the memorable banker and forger, was executed on November 30, 1824.

LETTER CCLXXIV (p. 166).—The book, transformed by the servant-maid into "Luster's Tables," was (as will easily be guessed) *Luther's Table-talk*.

LETTER CCLXXV (p. 168).—Leigh Hunt was still with his family in Genoa. See the allusion in the last sentences of the letter. He did not return to England till late in the following year, 1825.

*Vincentio* is Vincent Novello. Lamb probably wrote *Isabella*, but Mrs. Novello's name was *Mary Sabilla*; *Mr. Clark* was Charles Cowden Clarke, her son-in-law. The various details respecting the Novello family are pure romance. The reference to the quite recent marriage of Procter (in October 1824) further fixes the date of the letter.

*Irving has dedicated a book to S. T. C.* Irving's "Anniversary Sermon of the London Missionary Society," preached at Whitfield's Tabernacle in May 1824, and published with a Dedication to Coleridge. The following is an extract from this Dedication: "— When I state the reason to be that you have been more profitable to my faith in orthodox doctrine, to my spiritual understanding of the Word of God,

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and to my right conception of the Christian Church, than any or all of the men with whom I have entertained friendship and conversation, it will perhaps still more astonish the mind and stagger the belief of those who have adopted, as once I did myself, the misrepresentations which are purchased for hire and vended for a price concerning your character and works." See Mrs. Oliphant's *Life of Irving*, vol. i. chap. ix.

LETTER CCLXXVII (p. 172).—*The Chessiad*, a mock-heroic poem, by Charles Dibdin the Younger. The simile of the charwoman is a fair specimen of the whole, but (*pace* Lamb) is hardly up to the level of Hudibras. The volume sent was *Comic Tales and Lyrical Fancies*; including *The Chessiad*, a mock-heroic, in five cantos, etc. etc. (London, 1825.)

LETTER CCLXXVIII (p. 173).—*De Quincey's "Parody."* Lamb's "Letter to an Old Gentleman," etc., already more than once referred to as a parody of De Quincey's *Letter to a Young Man whose Education has been Neglected*.

*The "Horns."* A paper of Lamb's, entitled "A Vision of Horns," rather poor and forced, and on a dubious subject, was printed in the *London Magazine* for this month.

*The Memoir of Liston.* See *Mrs. Leicester's School*, etc. It appeared, as did also the Parody on De Quincey, in the *London Magazine* for January 1825.

*In the next Number I figure as a Theologian!* Lamb published a short paper, "Unitarian Protests," directed against the conformity to Church ceremonies by his old friends the Unitarians.

*I have lately picked up an epigram.* The epigram in question was by Henry Man, one of the clerks in the South-Sea House, when Lamb first knew that Institution. The two noble earls were Lord Spencer and Lord Sandwich. Lamb refers to the two "forgotten volumes" by Man, in his *Elia* Essay, "Recollections of the South-Sea House." The volumes were published in 1802: *Miscellaneous Works in Verse and Prose of the late Henry Man*. The epigram is there given. Man was Deputy-Secretary at the South-Sea House in 1793.

LETTER CCLXXX (p. 176).—*That ugly paper*, the "Vision of Horns" before mentioned.

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"*Dream on J. Bunyan.*" Refers possibly to some lines by Barton on seeing a portrait of John Bunyan, which were printed some time after in Major's edition of the *Pilgrim's Progress* with Southey's Biography of the author.

*The second Number.* Of the *London Magazine*, New Series.

*The queen of the East Angles.* Barton's daughter, Lucy.

LETTER CCLXXXI (p. 178).—*I saw Tuthill yesternight.* Lamb had been taking medical advice as to his qualifications to retire from the India House, on the score of ill-health.

LETTER CCLXXXIII (p. 180).—See Lamb's *Elia* Essay, "The Superannuated Man," and the notes thereon, in my edition of *Elia*. The final release from his slavery came about on the last Tuesday in March. Two medical men, Tuthill, and Coleridge's friend, Gillman of Highgate, gave him the necessary certificates.

LETTER CCLXXXIV (p. 184).—

"The little bird that wings the sky."

A random shot at Lovelace's—

"The birds that wanton in the air  
Know no such liberty."

*Tell me how you like "Barbara S."* See *Essays of Elia*. It appeared in the *London* for this month. The actual heroine of the story was Fanny Kelly.

LETTER CCLXXXVI (p. 187).—*Coleridge has just finished his Prize Essay.* Refers to a paper by Coleridge, on the *Prometheus* of Æschylus, read before the Royal Society of Literature on the 18th of May 1825.

*My "hiatus crumenæ."* What Falstaff calls this "consumption of the purse." Lamb had retired upon two-thirds of his salary; hence the reference to his missing "thirds."

LETTER CCLXXXVII (p. 189).—*My poor pittance in the "London."* The allusion is to the *Elia* Essay, "The Convalescent," in the *London Magazine* for this month.

*Your book.* Barton had sent Lamb his volume, *Poems*, by

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Bernard Barton, 1820. It contains "Meditations in Great Bealings Churchyard," and the other pieces referred to by Lamb. It is dedicated in some prefatory lines to Maria Hack, and the volume itself opens with "Verses supposed to be written in a Burial-ground belonging to the Society of Friends," in which the "baldness" of the ground, as regards "sculptured monuments," is apologised for.

*Anne Knight.* Mrs. Knight, a member of the Society of Friends, who kept a school at Woodbridge, was a dear and intimate friend of Bernard Barton and his daughter.

LETTER CCLXXXVIII (p. 190).—This letter is in reply to one from Coleridge, first printed in the "Literary Reminiscences" in *Hood's Own*. Coleridge had met with the *Odes and Addresses to Great People*, by Hood and his brother-in-law, J. H. Reynolds, but published anonymously, and had conjectured from internal evidence that the volume was by Lamb. He wrote accordingly to tax Lamb with it. "Yes, Master Charles," he writes, "you are discovered"; and he adds, "the puns are nine out of ten good, the 'Newgatory,' transcendent."

LETTER CCXC (p. 195).—Southey had sent Lamb his *Book of the Church* (1824), and his poem, the *Tale of Paraguay*, just published (1825). The poem was founded upon incidents in Dobrizhoffer's *History of the Abipones*, translated from the Latin by Sara Coleridge three years before. Hence the "compliment to the translatress" referred to by Lamb. In the third canto of the poem, Southey, in describing Dobrizhoffer, proceeds thus :—

"But of his native speech because well-nigh  
Disuse in him forgetfulness had wrought,  
In Latin he composed his history ;  
A garrulous, but a lively tale, and fraught  
With matter of delight and food for thought.  
And if he could in Merlin's glass have seen  
By whom his tomes to speak our tongue were taught,  
The old man would have felt as pleased, I ween,  
As when he won the ear of that great Empress Queen."

Southey's poem was prefaced with a poetical dedication to his little daughter, Edith May Southey, beginning—

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“Edith! ten years are numbered since the day  
Which ushers in the cheerful month of May,  
To us by thy dear birth, my daughter dear,  
Was blest.”

The poem itself opens with an apostrophe to the discoverer of vaccination—

“Jenner! forever shall thy honoured name.”

*I have a one-act farce going to be acted at the Haymarket.* Probably the *Pawnbroker's Daughter*, which happily was not destined to be performed.

*G. Dyer is in the height of an uxorious paradise.* According to Crabb Robinson, he married a laundress in Clifford's Inn.

LETTER CCXCI (p. 199).—*You have come off triumphant with Bartholomew Fair.* In the Number of the *Every-Day Book* for September 5, 1825, there is a long account of a personal visit to Bartholomew Fair, by Hone himself.

LETTER CCXCII (p. 200).—This playful note was printed by me for the first time. The allusion to “flame-coloured” hose would seem to arise out of an indistinct association with Sir Andrew Aguecheek.

LETTER CCXCIII (p. 201).—Lamb was at this time contributing to the new *Monthly Magazine* his “Popular Fallacies.” They appeared between January and September in this year, and are the “Proverbs” referred to. See also the following letter.

LETTER CCXCV (p. 202).—*I got your book.* Barton's last volume of poems, *Devotional Verses: founded on, and illustrative of, Select Texts of Scripture.* (London, 1826.)

*Uniform as they are, and untristorify'd.* This last word is certainly as Lamb wrote it, but what he meant by it, and from what he formed it, I must leave to the critics to determine.

*The “Spiritual Law”* is a short poem on the text “But the word is very nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou may'st do it.”

*Whipping the Greek drama upon the back of Genesis.* In some verses on Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac, Barton had written—

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“Brief colloquy, yet more sublime  
To every feeling heart  
Than all the boast of classic time  
Or Drama’s proudest art ;  
Far, far beyond the Grecian stage,  
Or Poesy’s most glowing page.”

LETTER CCXCVI (p. 203). — “*The Religion of the Actors.*” A little paper by Lamb, printed in the new *Monthly Magazine* for May of this year.

LETTER CCXCVII (p. 205). — *Your nephew’s pleasant book.* Henry Nelson Coleridge published this year with John Murray, *Six Months in the West Indies in 1825*, the narrative of a journey taken by the young man in company with his uncle for the benefit of his health. It contains pleasant and graphic descriptions of the various places visited, and is written throughout in a witty vein, and in a tone of rather ostentatious Epicureanism, which no doubt led to Coleridge’s strictures on its morality. The style is curiously unlike Lamb’s, but exhibits many signs of the influence of the *Sentimental Journey*, as Lamb truly remarks. But the little volume “saddens into excellent sense” towards the end, in a serious discussion of the then burning question of West Indian Slavery.

F. K. Fanny Kelly.

LETTER CCCI (p. 210). — *The likeness which accompanies this letter* was obviously the well-known etching on copper by Mr. Brook Pulham. This portrait was taken in 1825, and is now in the possession of the India Office.

LETTER CCCII (p. 211). — Mr. Dibdin was staying at Hastings, as his delicate health often obliged him to do, and was lodging at a baker’s, to which fact allusions will be discovered in this and the following letters. The theme of the little church at Hollington is again the subject of infinite variations. “Blucher Row” is a thing of the past, and has merged into a thoroughfare bearing a quite other name.

*Peter Fin.* The name of a personage in a poem of Thomas Hood’s.

LETTER CCCIII (p. 215). — Lamb and his friend Dibdin



## NOTES

were given to exchanging letters in rhyme. The "Dibdin Muse" seems to have favoured, in various degree, all members of the family, and we find Lamb retorting that he too came of a poetical stock, and adducing his father, old John Lamb, the *Lovel* of the Essay on "The Old Benchers of the Inner Temple." See that Essay, and my notes upon it. Poor Dibdin had apparently allowed "plan, sir" to rhyme to "stanza" in the effusion which called forth this reply. "Small Bohemia," or "Little Bohemia," remains to this day, I believe, the name of a district outside Hastings.

LETTER CCCIV (p. 218).—*The Quotidian*. Hone's *Every-Day Book*. Lamb had published some "Quatrains" to Hone in the *London Magazine*, which were reprinted in the *Every-Day Book* of July 9, 1826. Hone appended to them a poetical reply in the same number, headed "Quatorzians." For Lamb's verses, see *Poems, Plays, and Essays*. They begin—

I like you and your book, ingenious Hone !

LETTER CCCV (p. 219).—Another of those wild and grotesque effusions, written to amuse the invalid during his enforced loneliness at a watering-place. Mr. Dibdin's nephew informs me that his uncle was remarkable for his genuine piety and religious habits, which makes the banter even more extravagant. "Old Ranking" was, of course, one of the firm in the Old Jewry, young Dibdin's employers.

LETTER CCCVI (p. 222).—*The Garrick plays*. Lamb was laboriously going through this collection, bequeathed by Garrick to the nation, for the purpose of publishing selections from them in his friend Hone's *Table Book*.

I may just refer to Lamb's expression, "*dross matters*,"—matters, that is, touching *money*. In previous editions of Lamb's Letters, readings have varied curiously from "these matters" to "dress matters."

LETTER CCCVII (p. 224).—*Sacred Specimens*. Mr. Mitford published this year his *Sacred Specimens: Selected from Early English Poets*.

*Hood's book is mighty clever. Whims and Oddities*. Second Series.

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